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LIFE AND ADVENTURE IN PEACE AND WAR

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LIFE AND ADVENTURE IN PEACE AND WAR

BY

MAJOR-GENERAL

SIR ELLIOTT WOOD,

K.C.B., D.L., J.P.

LONDON

EDWARD ARNOLD & CO.

1924

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To
THE MEMORY OF
MY THREE DEAR BROTHERS

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PREFACE

I have been induced to publish these memoirs by the oft-expressed wish of my brothers, and of many friends in the Service; and would especially thank my old comrade, Brig.-General P. T. Buston, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., for his kindly advice.

My manuscript was edited by Miss Beatrice Home, to whom my cordial thanks are due.

I desire also to express my thanks for permission to re-publish accounts of canoe trips which have appeared in the various publications mentioned in the foot-notes.

ELLIOTT WOOD.

HOLMER PARK,
HEREFORD.

February, 1924.

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LIFE AND ADVENTURE IN PEACE AND WAR

CHAPTER I

EARLY LIFE—1844–64

My early days were spent at Orchardleigh, Ledbury, in Herefordshire, where my father had a large medical practice, having two assistants and keeping five horses—well-bred ones, for he was a keen man with hounds. He covered great distances on his rounds, on one occasion doing 70 miles in the day.

He used to take short cuts over fences and stiles, and generally cantered along the grass sides of roads, saying that nothing trained horses better to look where they were going and to be handy with their feet, than avoiding the little grips or drains running from the roadway to the side ditches.

He was deeply religious, and of a most happy, sanguine nature, so that one of my sisters said that he must be "the most praise-giving man that lived." He lived to be 92, and it was not until he was 80 that he confessed to me that he was beginning to feel a little old.

Both my grandmothers were sisters of General Sir Joseph Thackwell, of whom it is recorded in *Her Majesty's Army* that "no other British Dragoon ever saw so much Service." As a Captain he led

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the last charge of the 15th Hussars at Waterloo when, disabled by a shot through his bridle hand, he seized the rein in his teeth. Another shot shattered his shoulder, which caused him to fall from his horse, and he lay on the field all night.

When my grandmother Webb attained the age of 101, Queen Victoria sent her photograph through Lady Elizabeth Biddulph, commanding my grandmother's in return. Now she had never been photographed in her life, so as I happened to be home on leave I went to support her in the ordeal. She said, "You know, my dear, it is not quite honest being taken with my knitting, for I only do two rows a day now." She was at school at Gloucester when the French Revolution broke out; and so strong was the Red Republican feeling that the girls were not allowed to walk in the streets for fear of insult. She lived to within a few months of 103 years, having retained her faculties wonderfully.

My mother, a most accomplished woman, had five sons, one of whom died young, and three daughters. She devoted herself to fostering religious principles in us all, and, equally with my father, did not fail to give us salutary correction when needed, which we took as only right and proper.

We were a most united, happy family, then and ever. We used to delight in hearing my mother sing old songs and ballads to her guitar, and in listening to my father, who would read Shakespeare aloud, which we greatly enjoyed.

My father used to teach us Latin before breakfast. Hunting mornings were looked forward to with special pleasure, for then lessons were shortened and we saw him start in pink on his beautiful hunter.

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Besides a governess, a Frenchman and his wife came to give us lessons in French and music, while we drove to Gloucester, and sometimes to Cheltenham, for dancing lessons. Now Gloucester was 16 miles from Ledbury and Cheltenham 22 miles; but my mother thought little of the journey in the old-fashioned carriage with the big horse, Harold, who readily took on the job. Once he got out of the groom's control, but as my mother said she would whip any child that attempted to jump out, we sat as still as mice until carriage and all came quietly to rest in the ditch, from which we contrived to emerge practically without damage.

Ledbury is about equally distant from the three Cathedral towns of Worcester, Gloucester and Hereford, to which four-horsed coaches used to run before the railways existed, so that the town and roads were pleasantly enlivened by the cheery notes of the horn.

My two elder brothers went together to Swansea Grammar School, whose head master, Dr. Noon, was a friend of my mother, and I joined them, three years later, at the age of 11 in 1855. We had all begun riding very early: some of us, when tiny dots, on our big Newfoundland dog.

When I was 10 years old I sometimes rode Merriman, a perfect-mannered horse of 16 hands. My friends in the hunting field said, "Hallo! how will you ever get on again if you fall off?" The reply was, "I shan't come off unless I want to, but just look at what I have made." Whereupon a little rope ladder was produced from my pocket, to attach to the stirrup. I did not then think of getting on as I saw a little Kaffir boy do on the veldt some years later. He grasped the

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horse's tail and climbed up by the hock, using it as a ladder.

As mentioned, I accompanied my brothers to Swansea, where my cousin Frank Thackwell, a very sturdy lad, was also at school. Some boys lived with the head master, and there had been a custom to welcome a new-comer with some unpleasant ceremonies. Next to our dormitory of four was one of eight, with a bully at the head of it, but my brothers and Thackwell made it so clear that they would fight to the end to prevent my being a victim, that then and there the objectionable custom came to an end.

Dr. Noon used to take his house boys to beautiful Caswell and Langland bays for picnics. On one occasion I cheeked my cousin and fled down a steep hill to escape retribution. When he was close behind me I dropped, thinking he would over-run me and I should double back; but at the same moment he made his spring and we both came down on my elbow. I said, "My arm is broken," and was rather glad, for then I should escape the merited thrashing. As I could move it a tiny bit, he said it could not be broken. Then, feeling that I might cry if he kept talking about it, I asked him to go. After this, thinking it might be out of joint, I pulled it with the other hand as hard as possible, but of course with no good result. Later, we went bathing and swimming in the sea, my arm being easy though it had swollen to a great size. After this we walked along the shore and heard cries proceeding from a cave, so having taken off boots and socks and tucked up trousers, we entered and found a group of school girls cut off by the rising tide. The eldest, a nice young lady of 14, declared she would not be carried

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out by a boy, so was left to the last. I explained the situation, and the inevitable regret of her parents if she perished thus early in the waters; so she finally consented, and to me fell the privilege of carrying her out. As I had only one arm she was obliged to put her arms round my neck, and this was far from unpleasing to me. On the way home Dr. Noon took me to the doctor, but nothing could be done till the swelling had subsided. It was then found that the bone of the inner condile was broken off, and for nearly a year the elbow contracted in the night, and had to be straightened in the morning.

In the holidays we had a good time at home. As little boys we had fished in the Hereford and Gloucester canal; we had swum in it; and now we skated on it. Skating, after the ice had been broken by boats and thin ice had joined the floes, was especially exciting and somewhat hazardous. On one occasion, as we all three entered the deep cutting at Canon Frome, the clear thin ice bent in an alarming way. We shot to the footpath, but our little dog broke through the ice on the far side, and must soon have drowned. What could we do for him? I, as the lightest, with crooked stick in hand lay on my stomach; Miles, also on his stomach and holding my feet, helped to push me forward; while John, also prone, but with toes anchored in the bank, had hold of Miles' feet. The stick was pushed gradually on till it was hooked into Spot's collar; and then the whole chain cautiously and with difficulty was dragged to shore.

Then we used to walk over the Malvern Hills to fish at Birtsmorton Court, 8 miles off. This was an old moated Manor, much mentioned in *Malvern*

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Chase. It belonged to our cousin Cam Thackwell, Master of the Ledbury Hounds, whose acting Vice-master, by the way, was my uncle, Edward Webb. On the way home we supped at our uncle's, Colonel Webb, a fine all-round sportsman who for years commanded the Worcester Militia.

In my fifteenth year I entered King's College School, while Miles went for a year to Hereford Collegiate School before joining my eldest brother at King's College, London, where they studied medicine; so ere long we again saw a good deal of each other. On Saturday afternoons we would row on the Thames, or go on country excursions in search of entomological specimens for John, who then started his life-long hobby.

Later, I passed to the College, intending to enter the Royal Military Academy—the "Shop," as it was called.

A well-known crammer wrote to my father saying that if I went to him he would guarantee to pass me in high, but as the family finances were always low, I declined.

During my last half-year at the College I only attended a few lectures, but worked up by myself what I had previously learnt.

Then two days before the competitive examination I took a holiday in the country to clear the brain, and passed in thirty-second out of 266 competitors. A batch of sixty-six was admitted to the "Shop," and at the next examination I went up to second.

In London it had been my privilege to know my brother John's intimate College friends, all older men of high character and attainments, well known later in the medical world. Among them were W. Fairlie Clarke, with whom I lived in Bloomsbury

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Square, and J. Usher Huxley, who took me once as his guest to Paris.

In 1861, being just 17, I entered the R.M.A., Woolwich. At that time there was very little bullying, but the custom still prevailed of turning up the last-joined in their beds. The bedsteads were hinged near their heads and were turned up during the day against the walls. Shortly after the commencement of the Term, a number of old cadets ran into the room where four of us last-joined slept and turned us all up. I, being fond of gymnastics, cared little whether my head was up or down, so remained absolutely quiet during the operation. The others fought and struggled, vainly of course, and suffered grievous inconvenience. Then, when the raiders had gone into the passage, I heard them say, "We can't leave that little beggar like that, he'll suffocate." So they came and put me down again. Wisely, I said nothing then, but next day I thanked them for their kind solicitude for my health, and no more practical jokes were played on me.

The "Mutiny" took place soon after, though my participation in it was almost unwitting, for a senior corporal ran into my room saying, "When the bugle sounds don't turn out." So I went on reading without further thought.

The Cadets had been treated like a set of children, though men over 21 years of age were there, and the effect of the "Mutiny" was to bring about valuable and necessary improvements.

Our excellent Sergeant-major was known only as Sergeant-major "Of"; and this is one of his actual speeches: "I've seen a-many Cadets a-drilling of guns; but such an hinorderly and hunattentive lot

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I never was a-seeing of, nor one that paid so little hattention to what their hinstructors was a-saying of.... Steady, Mr. Galwey!" We were, however, rightly fond of him.

Though fond of all games and exercises, I was of little count at the Sports, although *facile princeps* at one thing which of course was not an "event": I could hop the whole 120 yards hurdle course with its ten flights of hurdles on one leg, without touching ground with the other. Also, then and till past 60, I could kneel down and rap the ground with the back of the head any number of times, which rare accomplishment came in very usefully at after-Mess competitions for years to come.

When the time came to choose between Sappers and Gunners I chose the former, though one had felt the greater glamour of the Artillery with its horses and guns, as against the Sapper officer with his roll of plans. Then, again, Captain Charles Brackenbury, the Artillery Instructor, had shown me great kindness, for I had spent many Sunday evenings at his house, besides going there regularly for "Part-singing." I was therefore drawn to the Gunners not a little, but my choice pleased my parents.

Once my cousin, Frank Thackwell, who had developed into a splendid-looking Cavalry officer, obtained permission to take me out for a day in London. It seemed so funny for him to be treating me as if he were my uncle, when I used to be above him at school, though he was 1½ years older. We were much grieved some years later that he died in India, after being mauled by a tigress which he had wounded.

The vacations were spent happily at Ledbury

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with the usual amusements of hunting, shooting, cricket, croquet, and dancing.

The two new wings of the Academy were built in my time, giving single rooms, one of which I fully expected to occupy for my last term. However, I was put in charge of one of the old "Divisions" in which the old Cadets who were low down in their batch, or who had lost a Term through rustication or other cause, were housed. They were all of them older than myself, so this was unpleasant though complimentary. There were two wildish fellows in my room, but they behaved like angels, a fact which was gratefully appreciated. There were all sorts of regulations against smoking, leaving one's room after "Lights out," etc.; but one got through the Term with much less trouble than was expected. Things have changed since then. Cadets no longer have to run across a court in winter and break the ice in the bathrooms. I did not mind it much, for my brothers and I have always used cold baths, winter and summer, up to old age.

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CHAPTER II

HOME SERVICE IN THE ROYAL ENGINEERS 1864–8

In January, 1864, I was commissioned, and joined at the School of Military Engineering, Brompton Barracks, Chatham.

Here my special chum, Harry Elsdale, and I lived together in most comfortable rooms in the Inner Lines, dining and lunching, however, at the Mess.

My chief recreations were on the river Medway, canoeing, rowing, and yachting. Sometimes I took a gun in the hope of getting an occasional wildfowl, usually a fruitless effort, but productive of sundry weird experiences. On one occasion having been put on shore with my gun on an island, I returned to find that the falling tide had left a wide expanse of mud—of Medway mud, soft and deep. Through this I struggled till, sinking over my hips, I stuck hopelessly bogged. My friends in the boat drove her up the mud, but, failing to reach me, pushed back into the water, and then with their utmost effort just got near enough. As, however, the boat could not then be pushed off the rescued one had to get out again into that horrible mud in order to help. When in clear water it was thought desirable to tow him overboard to cleanse the filth from his lower garments.

At one time an enthusiasm for Naval Engagements prevailed, commencing among boats and canoes.

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A sculler had gained an initial success over me in a canoe, whereby my paddle had been broken in two; but, in a moment when he could not turn round quick enough, I boarded him over the bow, compelling him to accept terms of peace, which were to tow me home.

Soon warfare spread to the yachts; and at last a set battle was arranged between the cutter of 9 tons against the *Mona* and *Sylph* of 5 tons and 3 tons respectively.

Bucknill commanded the *Talisman* with its crowded crew of eight, while the smaller boats carried five and three respectively, one of which I was to have skippered but unfortunately was prevented by duty.

There was the keenest competition for the Service, and only strong swimmers were taken.

The crews were rowed on board and at a given signal war commenced.

The smaller boats got up anchors and sails quicker than *Talisman* and, sailing across her bows, sent buckets of water over her crew as well as they could; then flew down the river.

Mona was first overhauled and after a fine struggle all her crew were pitched into the water, when a dinghy was dropped with one sculler to put them on their boat again, while *Talisman* took up a long pursuit of *Sylph*. Now the poor *Sylph*, though small, had an abnormally deep keel, so could not escape by going into shallow water; and eventually suffered the fate of her consort.

I pointed out later to her unfortunate crew the line of action that should have been adopted. She had seen the fruitless struggle of her ally against the powerful enemy, and she was even weaker. Each of

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her crew, therefore, instead of trying to keep on deck, should have jumped with one of the boarders into the waters, and so have levied a satisfactory toll.

We had various queer experiences, but so much damage to matériel resulted that the club put an end to the business, which had been refreshingly lively.

Liking to work the *Sylph* single-handed, I took Watson (later, Colonel Sir Charles) as a passenger, for he had not been on a yacht before. On the way down to Sheerness I raced and beat a larger boat from the Marine Barracks. When outside Sheerness on the way to the Nore, the other turned for home and the *Sylph* turned too. The wind was dead aft, and there was a little popple on, but I was keen to race the other back, so at last asked my friend to boom out the foresail. Naturally, of course, he knew nothing about it, and everyone knows how incomprehensible are nautical terms to a landsman, so he had to give it up. In spite of the risk, I asked Watson if he thought he could take the tiller and keep her nose steady on a certain landmark for less than a minute.—"Oh, nothing simpler"—so the tiller was yielded to him; but I had only taken two steps as far as the mast when I heard a shout and was knocked into the water. Catching at the shrouds on the way overboard and with legs dragging through the water, I hauled myself on board. Watson was gone!—I rushed to the helm: the tiller was gone!—dived below to try and find something to serve as tiller, but in vain—only thing to do, try and make short tacks to windward towards him, which meant running up and down the deck, putting foresail over, and back to mainsheet—backwards and forwards, as she came up into the wind and fell away again.

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We made progress, and in response to my yells a boat put off from Sheerness with four rowers, and sail drawing, and ran us a dead heat for my friend. —"For God's sake, sir, leave him to us, you'll cut him down." Watson came on board, quite cool and holding the tiller. Instead of using the steersman's well, he had been composing himself, Eastern fashion, with crossed legs on deck, and had gybed; the heavy boom doing the rest. We had only 7½*d.* between us wherewith to recompense the boatmen; but the good fellows said, "Never mind that, sir, we've saved a life."

Watson's only comment on the situation was that he thought I must have gone mad when he saw me running up and down the deck.

We also had a useful schooner of 13 tons, which occasionally was taken over to Flushing, etc.; and the boatmen and fishermen summed up proceedings generally by saying, "Them gents fears nought 'cos they knows nought."

One of the means of imparting professional instruction to us was by tours under a R.E. Instructor to view all sorts of works.

On one occasion at Buxton we put up at a new hotel, just opened, where all the lights went out on our arrival, a coincidence which was most unjustly attributed to us! Next morning, however, it was a little unfortunate that Elsdale should have asked the chambermaid the way to the bath, for she, through some misunderstanding, showed him a door leading on to the roof. Here was a great tank which he thought was a swimming tank, into which he quickly plunged. The maid heard the noise, rushed to the manager and told him that the gentleman was trying to drown himself. Now this tank

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was the supply to all the baths, so there was a prodigious fuss. My remark was that if anyone had to go into that central supply, I would prefer Elsdale, for he always looked so fresh and fair. A lady in the hotel wrote to a friend at Chatham, "Is it possible that the leader of this wild lot of young fellows is the quiet Captain Willoughby Marsh whom we know at Chatham!"

Another form of instruction was the survey of a piece of country in a certain number of days. Elsdale and I had a district round Meopham in Kent,—and we received much hospitality from Mr. Barnet of Meopham Court. He was Vice-master of the West Kent Hounds; and on one occasion, having six puppies out to "walk" and also a fox in confinement, he decided to enlarge the fox as cubbing had commenced. He mounted us both, gave Reynard a good start, far from any covert, and laid on the pack, which raced away merrily, with plenty of music. Eventually the fox, being short of wind owing to lack of exercise, stopped and faced his pursuers, snarling savagely. The puppies, having no old hound to show them the next thing to do, sat down on their haunches and with big solemn eyes looked at Reynard and then at each other, making a delightful picture. Soon the fox, having wind enough, went away very fast and popped into a covert close by, and we whipped off.

A somewhat similar scene was witnessed by me some years later in South Africa. A number of foxhound puppies and two young jackals had been brought up together in the yard of the Officers' Quarters at Grahamstown; and eventually a jackal was enlarged on the veldt with a good start. After a fair gallop the puppies caught up their little

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friend and doubtless said, "Here we are again: how nicely he smells! Let us all run on together." And so they did for a bit; till Jacky was quite pumped, and stopped. Then hounds were called off for a bit; and very shortly Jacky went to ground among rocks, none the worse but probably greatly puzzled by the proceedings.

While at Chatham an attack of rheumatic gout in both knees so crippled me that it was a case of hobbling on two sticks, so that the doctors said I should almost certainly be permanently crippled if I did not go on sick leave and lie up absolutely.

This I did at home, lying all day in a hammock on the lawn for a couple of months, except on the days when my dear mother drove me to sketch the churches in the neighbourhood.

Probably the most interesting event during my stay at the S.M.E. was the return of Charlie Gordon, who as a Captain in the R.E. had saved the Chinese Empire in the great revolution. He had been invariably successful in capturing the fortified rebel cities, for with a quick eye he had detected each weak spot, and was "ever-victorious." He refused the rich money reward offered him—but was made a Mandarin of the highest order.

In the summer of 1866 Elsdale and I were sent to Weymouth; but he was soon sent across to Portland, while I was posted to the 26th Company R.E., which was building the Nothe Fort.

Here it struck me that the arched casements carrying the heavy guns were not strong enough to resist the shock of firing at high elevations, so I discussed the matter with the two senior subalterns, but they said that a much better mathematician than I had failed to prove them too weak, so it

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was not much use for me to try. However, I worked the thing out; and suggested strengthening the arches by ribs below, under the racers. Major Percy Smith, C.R.E., submitted the matter to the War Office and, my calculations being accepted as substantially correct, the necessary ribs were added at the Nothe and at similar forts elsewhere.

Elsdale and I bought a Thames-built pair-oared boat and fitted her with two masts, the mainmast having a hoist of 14 feet and its boom a length of 9 feet—she proved a perfect success, contrary to all and sundry objections and gloomy prophecies. On paying a visit to a man-of-war off Portland we took an old tar with us, and he exclaimed, "I have sailed in brigs and schooners and cutters, but never flew like this." Her length was 20½ feet and beam 3¾ feet.

On another occasion, when bathing from her some miles from shore, we did a very long swim. There was possibly an unacknowledged rivalry between us, for neither suggested turning back till at last we simultaneously did so; and then the boat was seen to be unpleasantly far off. We swam and swam side by side without a word, till at last with a great effort we got on board. Then Elsdale said, "In another three strokes I must have gone down." He was livid and his nails were quite blue.

This taught a lesson never to be forgotten.

When the Engineers were directed to take over the unfinished breakwater fort from the Admiralty, I was ordered by my C.R.E. to report on it. It was circular, a mass of concrete to above high-water level, whence the walls had been raised with great granite blocks to a height of 10 feet with a thickness of 12 feet, all dowelled together, good solid

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work. I noticed one or two very slight cracks in the concrete, and so Percy Smith, being very cautious, reported that he would like to watch the fort a little before taking over. The very next night a gale breached the structure, tossing the huge blocks into the centre like pebbles and scooping the concrete out like cheese.

Elsdale and I had both volunteered for India and had been warned for service there, when his father died and his lawyer told him that his presence as the eldest son was essential for the settlement of affairs; so he went up to the War Office accompanied by me. At that time it may be said that there was no lack of volunteers, so the Deputy Adjutant-General R.E. agreed to cancel the order; but then, turning to me, said, "But what has that to do with you?" My reply was, "You cannot send me to India without Elsdale, sir." The D.A.G. burst out laughing and said to the A.A.G.R.E., who just came in, "Look here, Browne, Wood says we can't send him to India without Elsdale."

And they didn't.

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CHAPTER III

SERVICE IN EASTERN PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA—1868–71

Early in 1868 we both got orders for the excellent station of the Cape, embarking in April on the *Roman*, about 2,300 tons, the best ship of the Union Line.

Having half a day at Madeira, we visited some old friends and returned rather late to the shore after everyone else had left for the ship. We took the boat which had brought us and with which we had an agreement for taking us back on specified terms, yet when about half-way the four rowers stopped and demanded a preposterous sum. I whispered to Elsdale, "Let us shout, '*Roman* ahoy!'" He, however, said, "Don't let us make a fuss, for if we treat the demand with indifference they will go on." Instead of this, they turned round for the shore. We talked together unconcernedly and did not even discuss the situation, but immediately the boat grounded jumped out simultaneously, ran to a crew of the biggest men there, practically forced them to put off with us, promising double fares if we reached the *Roman*. This we did just as the Captain had given us up and the engines were moving. The other crew had their row for nothing.

At St. Helena many passengers mounted horses to view the island, but as the attendant boys hung on to their horses' tails up the very steep hill, pro-

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gress was all too slow. Elsdale and I managed to shake our boys off, and were the only ones to reach Longwood.

After leaving St. Helena we got up sports on board, and one event was cock-fighting. Elsdale was mounted on a stalwart Scotchman's back, and I on the equally sturdy Captain's, but ere long, contrary to all rules, the horses began to wrestle and we all four came down with a crash, my leg being undermost. Serious damage to my knee ensued. The Principal Medical Officer for the Cape, who was on board, diagnosed it as cracked head of bone or worse.

At Cape Town my friend received orders for Natal and I for Grahamstown. At Port Elizabeth the P.M.O., his wife and I started in a mule-wagon for Grahamstown, distant about 90 miles, over bad roads and bridgeless rivers. The front seat was slung so as to give some little relief from the jolts, but behind, where I was, the jars to my bandaged knee were very trying, though it was supported by both hands. Now the P.M.O. had his two horses following us, one being led, so I asked to ride the latter—of course with the damaged leg hanging loose. Arrived at Grahamstown, I used to move about in this way on a pony, for it was three months before the leg recovered.

At this time Grahamstown was the Military Head-quarters of the Command, and being also a cathedral town, was altogether a most desirable station. Cricket, croquet, archery, riding-parties on the veldt, theatricals and dances gave variety of amusement, while shooting was obtainable at a little distance.

The little R.E. Mess of three subalterns was in the

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quarters of Ferrier, the Adjutant. About twenty years later he was on board H.M.S. *Eurydice*, which capsized with all hands in an icy squall off the Isle of Wight. Ferrier, who was stoutly built, resisted the cold so that he was picked up still living by a teetotal smack, and feebly put his arms round his rescuer's neck. That tender-hearted fisherman said at the inquest, "I knew it would be the last kiss he would get, so I kissed him."

The other member was W. St. George Burke, a good sportsman and clever with his brush in water-colours, who gave me some useful hints. We went once on a fortnight's sketching trip together, covering long distances on our ponies with kits in saddle-bags. We revelled in snow on the Great Winterberg Mountain ; but on the other hand were weather-bound three days at the foot of the Katberg Pass.

A few months after arrival I had formed one of a party of colonists and officers who rode out some 24 miles for a day's buck shooting. On our return in the evening a fog began to rise, so I at once observed the direction of the wind on my face. I had accustomed myself when on the Chatham Lines to walk with my eyes shut, keeping my right direction by always having the wind on the same spot on my face or neck. After a time I noticed that we were off the road, which was a soft unmetalled one. None of us knew where we were, or how long it was since the road had been left. Soon the rest of the party came up saying, "We are thankful to find you, for we are lost." My answer was, "You certainly have found us, but we are lost too." Then, remembering the direction of the wind when my face had been set straight for home, I started at right-angles to the original direction in

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order to cut the road which we had left. After a bit, however, the rest grumbled, saying my line was no good, and that we had better stop for the night where we were. One of the colonists suggested, "Let my old horse try: he ought to know his way." So we let him have a trial, but at last I said, "I am going off on my own again," and of course the rest followed. In due course the road was hit, but by this time we were so befogged that we could not tell whereabouts on it we were. However, our troubles were over.

My stud consisted of a well-bred, powerful horse of 14–3 hands, and a pony, Toby, 13–3 hands, with a great reputation for endurance, but said to be nervous, especially at rivers. Both were stallions.

One night a party of us went for some fishing on the Upper Kareiga. As there was a cricket match next day and I happened to be the Garrison slow bowler, our Captain had enjoined me to be in bed by midnight. Leaving the party fishing, I decided, though ignorant of the locality, to take a short cut cross-country, trusting to the brightness of the moon. Coming to a deep wooded kloof down which ran a narrow foot-track deep-cut in the rock, I dismounted to lead my pony, but could not induce Toby to follow. I was obliged perforce to mount again, though there was no room for me under the trees. Laying my head down close along his shoulder, we entered the unknown, but soon came to a halt, for my head was wedged fast in the fork of a tree. All my efforts to release it were fruitless, till the pony seemed to be slipping round, and I found myself under his belly; the saddle having slipped right round. All the time I kept talking to Toby; and by pressing his forelegs apart was just able to

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crawl out between them, after which he readily followed me.

On another occasion, after bowling half the day, I left the cricket field for a 60-mile night-ride, to catch up a shooting party which had gone on to Bedford District, for springbuck shooting, on the lands of Dutch farmers.

When shooting at a fixed target we officers were about as good as the Dutchmen, but at running game shots we were nowhere. After the first day they got into form and made surprising shots.

When these antelope were disturbed they used to gallop for the heads of the valleys, and we had generally to gallop diagonally to get within range and then jump off the ponies. While we officers were putting up our rifle-sights the range would be continually altering. The Dutchman never altered his sights, but used his judgment for a full or fine sight, and his power of estimating distances on the veldt was remarkable.

We broke up each day into small parties. One day Hume, a well-known big game hunter, failed to return to camp. Hume had been with Phillips of the 32nd Regiment and had got within range of buck. In jumping off his horse he had broken his leg in an ant-bear hole. Lying, however, on the ground he yet bagged a buck racing past him, then, crawling to the top of an ant-hill, he got into the saddle, rode to find Phillips, and went with him to a farm where he remained several weeks.

Next day we moved camp to another distant farm where I had to leave them. Toby carried me comfortably the 71 miles to Grahamstown in twenty-five hours, with rifle and saddlebags. So in 7½ days he had trekked 150 miles, had many a gallop after

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springbuck, and all this on short commons of oat-hay with such grazing as there was. My practice was to jump off at the top of hills, which was good for us both.

My most interesting duties were visiting the old Frontier Posts and perambulating W.D. Lands over a wide area to see that no encroachments were made or boundary stones moved. I was allowed to take a man with me and so could have drawn forage for three horses, but always preferred going alone, so two sufficed.

For another of Toby's performances, old notes may be quoted:—

"Started from Grahamstown, perambulated Cawood's Post, decided to try and reach Peddie that night by Kaffir tracks, instead of in two days by the usual road; had no guide, the general direction only being given by a Kaffir. Eventually reached Fish River Bush (the old bush fastnesses of the Gaika Kaffirs), the track being a tiny rocky watercourse down which the pony followed me, grunting his disapproval, as rocks or trees caught him or the saddlebags, on one side or the other. There was no sign of the track being used by horses, and the Fish was flowing deep down at the bottom! After threading the belt of high rushes, the bank was reached, the tide running strong, with deep muddy banks,—clearly not the Ebb and Flow drift. It was sundown, and I had to get on—so I strapped rifle behind the saddle and tried to lead the pony down a very steep bank, intending to swim alongside. However, he wouldn't lead, so remounted, and then Toby slid resignedly down into deep water, and swam so strongly that I did not throw myself off. Guided him clear of nasty snag (had read that you couldn't guide by rein when swimming) and he scrambled up the far bank on knees and nose as for dear life. He was so frightened I had to let him stand and be talked to, to recover his nerves, for on first attempting to remove the dripping saddlebags he used his heels (fortunately unshod) on his best friend. He had a short graze, while I took a hurried sketch of the grand twilight scene. Finally reached the Downs in the moonlight with tracks everywhere; the inhabitants of Fingoe Krall had gone to roost, so crawled into hut and roused them. We couldn't understand one another, as sup-

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posed linguist sent for was quite hopeless. A happy thought occurred to me. I spread the spare clothes (which were hanging on poor Toby to dry) on the ground, lay down, pretended to go to sleep, pointed to linguist and said 'Peddie.'—'Ja, Boss, ja: Ped.'—and away he went for his kerrie and soon showed the lights of Peddie, for we were only three miles off. On the way he had asked for 'hot water,' meaning brandy, but he laughed gaily when I pantomimed swimming, getting cold, and drinking it all up—it was only sherry, by the way."

After this trek of 60 miles Toby was quite fit for a 35-mile trek journey the next day. A gun or rifle was carried on these treks on the chance of getting guinea-fowl, bustard, or buck at the end of the day's business.

We used to go in for mounted paper-chases, but as some of the mounts required much persuasion, there was considerable reluctance to go hare. It was declared that it was easy enough for me, my horse being such a fencer. I finally agreed to go on my pony who was known not to jump.

After a week of patient effort the day came and Toby had not yet condescended to jump. I had not yet given him whip or spur, so was still hopeful, for he had evidently begun to think whether he might not try.

The whole of the fifteen minutes law was nearly consumed at the first ditch and bank, while the two attendant grooms carrying the spare bags of paper looked sadly on. At last, when he had almost made up his mind to try, a cut on his stern sent him flying over, and after that there was no hint of refusal or blunder in a 7-mile course with thirty-four fences, including a redoubtable double which had never before been attempted.

Talking of horses, there was a certain fine animal which my friend, Dr. Churchill, said that neither

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he nor his groom could ride, so I asked to try. I mounted without spurs and desired him to move by all the known entreaties—but move he would not. So the grooms buckled on my spurs, and the gentlest touch was given, whereupon he ran backwards and threw himself over. I was in the saddle again as the horse gained his legs. With the bit in his teeth he tore through the barrack gates, down the wide main street, to the far end of the town, when at last I gained control, and then gave him far more than he wanted over the veldt.

Next day, on the grass instead of the gravel, as being softer falling, there was a precise repetition of this performance in every little detail; so I advised Churchill to sit on his back smoking till the beast was only too thankful to be allowed to move. As I did not smoke it would be too tedious, unless with an interesting novel. He did so, with perfectly satisfactory results, but when he was away on leave the horse returned to his evil ways, and was promptly sold.

There were pleasant picnicking parties to the mouths of the rivers Cowie, Kareiga, and Kasouga, distant some 35 miles, the last river disappearing into the sands before reaching the sea.

On one occasion five of us camped for ten days at the mouth of the Kareiga, shooting and fishing. When netting, we used to swim round the outside of the net, splashing the water to keep the "springers" from jumping out.

To fish from the rocks in the sea, Maynard, a big fellow, and I would swim across the river, while the others would use the farmers' boat higher up, as the conditions of tide were said to be very dangerous at times. We two were returning one day, the

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rest going up to the ferry, when Maynard, whose scanty clothing was already soaking wet, went in as he was, while I stayed to make a bundle of my dry things on my head.

I saw him wading, some yards as I thought, in mid-stream till his knees appeared above water, but when quite close to him I could get no farther. He looked very anxious and told me to swim as hard as possible, so I carefully laid my bundle on the water to be carried up-stream, and laid myself out for the sidestroke. He took one step towards me and I just succeeded in touching his outstretched fingers. This was enough to make him lose his footing, which he could not regain, though persisting till much exhausted, when he rejoined me at our starting-point. The tide was rushing very strongly over a submerged long sandbank, steep-sided towards us, up which Maynard had been struggling a few feet instead of a dozen yards as it seemed to me.

The farmers, knowing the tide was at the dangerous point, had at once rowed down in case of need; and picked up the valuable bundle, still floating.

On another occasion the boat went up the river, while I took my gun through the bush, to meet them higher up. After an hour's work I found myself exactly at my starting-point, the only time I so lost direction in the Cape. Climbing up one of the highest trees, I was able to get my distant point, which was then made all right.

Shooting spring-hares (Cape Haas) by the aid of a lantern at night was a novel experience. One sees a ball of light, the eye reflecting the light, and aims at it. The first time of doing so, I had no idea

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of the sort of game it would be, till a gerboa was picked up which proved excellent eating, the flesh being white.

Owing to the position of the eyes, only one can be seen glowing at a time. It is important therefore not to shoot if two eyes are seen close together, as trouble may result. On one occasion a farmer friend of mine said to his companion with the gun: "There are two of them together—shoot!" with the result that a very valuable Angora ram was slain.

Fires at night often occurred at Grahamstown; and the Civil population always looked to the Military to put them out. Now when I became Frontier Adjutant it practically rested with me to decide, as I lived in barracks, whether to turn the fire party out or not. Now the work was detrimental to uniforms and it was unsound that everything should be left to us, so eventually, if my night-glasses could see the cottage or shed to be in an isolated position, the military were not turned out.

One Sunday, on coming from church, I saw a fire, to which I ran. I found the roof of one end of a row of thatched cottages on fire. Getting on to the roof and holding on to the mortar ridge with one hand, I swung buckets of water to check the spread, until the arrival of the military. Suddenly the ridge gave way and I shot down the steep slope. Turning on my back and trying to dig my elbows into the thatch, I flew with great velocity into the middle of the road. Fortunately I had learnt in gymnasia how to drop, so though it was expected that I must be badly damaged, yet only my heels were bruised.

The climate was charming. At times there were grand displays of half a dozen simultaneous thunderstorms on the hills all round Grahamstown. On one

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occasion I saw 2¼ inches of rain fall in fifteen minutes, as registered at the Government rain-gauge—a wonderful sight!

In 1870 Head-quarters moved from Grahamstown to Cape Town, and I was left to hand over all barracks and posts to the Civil Government. Two companies of the old 32nd Regiment also remained, with whom I worked up a very useful cricket team.

The officers in barracks had kept two baboons chained in the yard where some foxhound puppies roamed. The baboons became so fond of them that when the regiment marched off for embarkation, each baboon, chained behind a bullock-wagon, had annexed a fat puppy, carrying it on one arm. At every halt the puppies were placed between the knees and gravely and assiduously flea-ed. All four seemed thoroughly to enjoy the operation.

Shortly before this, inquiring Subalterns had desired to see the effect of strong drink on baboons —shall we hope as a warning to humans?—and the result was at last obtained after great consumption of lump sugar steeped in brandy. Next day the poor baboons sat with aching heads in their hands, and mournfully refused to be comforted even by the puppies.

The time for leaving many kind friends and a delightful station at last arrived, and in the spring of 1871 I started on my last trek of 400 miles for the final clear-up, going round by Fort Beaufort and Alice to King William's Town. Here Elsdale had recently arrived from Natal to take charge, and here also, a year before, I had ridden the winner in the steeplechase at a large meeting. My instructions had been to wait on the favourite to get a lead at the fences, and to beat him on the run in, as my mount

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was the faster. Having, however, tried my mount overnight, I was satisfied as to his jumping powers, so after the first fence I followed my own judgment, and he came in an easy winner in 6½ minutes over a 3-mile course.

Elsdale had a bathing-place at the bottom of his garden in the Buffalo River, which the officers used to frequent. One early morning I was going off the spring-board in a somersault, and begged my friend, who was dancing about at the other end, to give me plenty of time to clear. However, before my head re-emerged it was driven down again, and when I finally came to the top somewhat short of breath, there was Elsdale swimming with one hand and rubbing his head with the other.

The onlookers declared that it was a moment of thrilling interest to watch one head rising to the top while Elsdale's, in his frog-like dive, was descending upon it.

After a stay of two days, we two left for East London, 35 miles, at the mouth of the Buffalo. On the way we shot partridges, the brace of pointers ranging beautifully on either side of the road and backing each other up perfectly as we cantered to their "point." As the sport was good we took two days on the journey.

A couple of days at East London, and then in the evening I crossed by the ferry to see my friend off home, intending to walk back by the Ebb and Flow drift, but my diary reads as follows:—

"Finally stopped by a bush fire and driven to the river where it was 200 yards wide. There was no time to get to the ferry before dark, and the bush work was heavy; so a bundle was made of the clothes and tied on to my head—a strong wind made bundle wobble, so had to be steadied with one hand—swimming

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under difficulties—the farther we got the heavier the ripple: awkward to get bundle waterlogged, so decided to turn back and mournfully acknowledge defeat. Did a good bit of bush work all in the dark, and at last by lusty shouting got the ferryman from the far side."

The diary continues:—

"Next day trekked along coast, crossing the river Keiskama near mouth, Toby swimming behind boat—about 400 yards—saw black fin going down river: boatman said a shark—however, must bathe in every river and lake, so went out alone in boat; saw another black fin, waited till some way off, then in with somersault to make big splash and back over stern pretty quick. Repeat operation and relieved to draw legs safely inboard, though one hardly need fear, as the sharks have plenty of fish to eat. At East London one 12 feet long and two of 9 feet were caught the day after Elsdale left at the spot where we bathed each day. We weren't altogether happy—dive in from quay, scramble out and try to appear unconcerned; but the grinning sharks' heads on hotel walls would demonstrate at breakfast what unpleasant bathing companions might come and sniff about us.

"Saw cotton-growing tried according to the various notions of farmers on no settled plan—'Sea Island,' 'New Orleans,' and 'Egyptian'—uncertainty of labour a great obstacle. Farms neglected owing to the diamond fever—great want of roads, unbridged rivers, and poor dams: the latter, due to ignorance of the pressure of water, made too slight; and so the embankment, big mass of earth though it may be, breached at the first filling and involving the whole series of dams down the valley.

"Farmers go on increasing stock instead of building sheds whereby horse-sickness and lung-sickness would be reduced.

"Reached Grahamstown in time for farewell cricket match; and poor Toby had to be sold while Ruby went with me to Cape Town."

The above mention of "Ruby" requires explanation. Sir Percy Douglas considered him as about the best Colonial-bred horse in the country; but owing to a bad blemish he went to me cheap. His name then was Punch, but a conclave of ladies, his great admirers, re-named him "Ruby." A quaint idea, for Ruby is hardly a gentleman's name.

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During my many solitary treks by Kaffir tracks about the country there never was the slightest trouble with the natives, even when a little trouble was supposed to be brewing, though at Grahamstown two incidents occurred that might have proved awkward. I used to take runs of a couple of miles on the flats in the gloaming to keep myself fit. Once, on descending the hill into Grahamstown on a solitary bit of road, two Kaffirs who had been walking on either side suddenly closed in to bar my progress. This was a surprisingly truculent act, so, without checking my run, I cut right and left at their faces with my light stick, but without intending actually to hit them. Whereupon they both sprang aside, leaving clear passage.

On another occasion on a very dark night when I was going along a lonely bit of road from Judge Dwyer's, I heard whisperings and then steps coming across to me. Now there had been one or two assaults and robberies on that side of the town, and the offenders were supposed to be privates (half-breeds) of the Cape Corps. I bent low down to get some faint glimpse of the shape of their head-gear against the sky, and judged they might be two of those men.

Holding my substantial umbrella at the charge, a body came heavily on it and fell away, doubtless much inconvenienced in the region of the bread-basket! I walked on, and in the darkness could easily have got clear. Hearing, however, the men running after me, shouting imprecations, I called out that I was an officer, and ordered them back to barracks, and that was the end of it.

Arrived at Port Elizabeth, my servant was left to embark my horse. An hour later he came run-

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ning after me saying that they had quite failed and would I come?—knowing that the horse would do anything for me. There was in those days no quay, the steamers lay some way out, and the horse had to be led through the little surf and slung into a lighter. Half a dozen men had failed to drag him out. There was a light pier running out, along which I walked, and when Ruby saw me he cocked his ears, neighed joyously, and pranced through the water. Arrived on board, he was put close to the atrociously noisy donkey-engine, but I managed to compose his nerves by whistling his favourite airs.

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CHAPTER IV

SERVICE AND SPORT IN WESTERN PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA—1871–3

Arrived at Cape Town, I was quartered in the Castle, in rooms said to be haunted. They were situated over those in which the last Dutch Governor had been murdered by a woman.

Owing to shortage of officers I, though only a Subaltern, was C.R.E. of the Western Province, which was really a Lieut.-Colonel's or Major's appointment. The only other R.E. at Cape Town was Colonel Fanshawe, C.R.E. South Africa, including Natal.

Soon after settling down, all my spare time was occupied in the design, and building with my own hands, of a canoe of unique design and construction. The chief points aimed at were extreme handiness, enabling it to thread rocks in rapids, and also seaworthiness under sail. (See Appendix for description.)

Finally, after the *Zephyr* had been varnished, my scoffing friends and acquaintances, and the Staff, were invited to the launch of "Wood's mad idea" in Table Bay, when a unanimous verdict of approval was the result. She proved as good as she looked when she started next day, against a strong wind and sea, to visit a ship in the Docks. The steps of the jetty from which we started only ran down to within 3 feet of the water, and there was a nasty wash along its face. Two men let her down by the head and

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stern ropes after a wave had passed, when I jumped in and was ready with the paddle before the next wave came.

Straight up we went, and down with a smack on the other side of the wave, while a roar from the assembled boatmen and populace greeted the performance. Another big wave, again the *Zephyr* shoots her nose straight up, and again the crowd roar, but then, having got way on, we faced the seas comfortably, the combined well-cover and apron proving perfect.

I was now keen to venture down the Berg River, which everyone declared to be impossible.

[1] Everyone stated the impossibilities of so hazardous an attempt. "Have you any idea of the roaring flood at this time of year? How do you propose to get through the trees and bushes?—there are places where you couldn't cut your way through in a week. And how about the rocks?"

Then the great authority on the subject looks at me half-pityingly and says, "My good fellow, do you know what palmiet is?—are you aware that a dog can hardly work through it—that the whole bed of the river is choked with it for miles—that you will be rushed into it and be unable to get out of it?"

To this I replied that having knocked about on the Eastern Frontier for nearly three years, I was pretty well acquainted with the awkward appearance of African rivers, but that my acquaintance with the palmiet had yet to be formed.

Eventually, in spite of all discussion, I started on my trip on the afternoon of June 25. I bundled one hundred and one things into the canoe and, not having a minute to spare to catch the last train, I

[1] Extract from *Cape Monthly Magazine*, July 15, 1872.

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doubled off to the station, while two trusty grooms trundled the *Zephyr* merrily on her wheels after me. . . .

"Guard, stop the train for half a minute."

"Can't do it, sir."

"Station-master, can you let the train stop for a quarter of a minute?"

"Impossible."

"It's a matter of life or death: my canoe will be here in two seconds."

This statement seemed nearly to knock the gentleman in tall hat off his legs. At the same time a commotion was seen at the other end of the platform, and I had the satisfaction of hearing "Canoe for Wellington," and in another minute we were off.

It appeared that, exclusive of the canoe, whose weight is 60 lb., the weight of stores and gear was 70 lb., made up of gun, cartridges, re-capping apparatus, spare powder and shot, etna, kettle, lantern, food, wardrobe, books, enamelled plates, small masts and sails, wheels, etc.

The wheels were 1 foot in diameter, turned solid in hard wood, the axletree of special design, and the arrangement worked well.

Arrived at Wellington, about 60 miles from Cape Town, the *Zephyr* was left at the station, while I went on to the inn, where the first care was to inquire for a tailor, as I had with me a pile of mackintosh which I had snatched at the last moment from a certain tailor who had failed to convert it into a cape and skirt. As it had been pouring for days, the prospect of having no protection against the weather was not pleasant, so a small black boy with a lantern proceeded to pilot me across the "flat." This soon proved to have many hollows filled with water; so

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finally I said, " Boy, plunging into these puddles may vary the monotony of our evening stroll, but you have lost the track." He held the light low down as if he was looking for a sixpence, but as we were in the middle of a small pond, he was forced to admit the fact. On being told to go straight in the direction in which cottage ought to be, we soon reached it. There I found a German who could not speak English but who said (pointing to enough garments to keep him going for a week) that he had to finish all those that night ; whereupon I retired and after supper set to work myself. When finished the cape had armholes covered with flaps, and was used in heavy seas or rain ; while the skirt, 5 feet 9 inches by 3 feet 9 inches, could be worn walking, tied round the body and buttoned down the front, while it also served to tent over the well of the canoe at night.

The following morning I was up very early and into the village, rapping at the doors until a shop was opened and I was arrayed in a pair of new, so-called " cords," my second pair of trousers having been forgotten in the hurry of the start. I soon learnt something about that sort of article, for water had a most peculiar effect on them, and until washed and mangled their condition was a source of grief to me. Then the buttons would fly off in a disturbing manner, giving my needle plenty of occupation at first. When I got back to the station, on the platform of which my stores were laid out, a feeling of stupefaction overcame me as I gazed on my small vessel and then on that terrible array of thoroughly necessary articles. The bystanders gave me to understand that I might save myself the trouble of attempting to solve the difficulty, for it was not possible. However, eventually everything fitted in

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beautifully, although inflated bladders representing 130 lb. of buoyancy were retained, pushed into the bow and stern.

The *Zephyr* was now trundled on her wheels over very wet ground and launched into the Berg at 9 a.m.

In dry summers the river here hardly exists,—but after the heavy rains it was full, and so even here the body of water was great and the current generally strong. There were many deep reaches, perhaps 80 yards wide, where the current was slow, but in other places, the rapids were almost too strong.

The weather was perfectly calm and lovely, and the river scenes were delicious—the trees and bushes in the river and on each side of it, with their leaves, red, brown and yellow; the banks with the dark green scrub and patches of emerald green grass; the background of bold mountains with their varied effects—everything reflected perfectly in the calm water of the long reaches. For the first six days I was often wishing to stop and sketch, but the distances were too great to admit of much delaying. Some of the twilight effects were especially lovely, and seen as I saw it, the Berg River scenery was a treat of its kind.

That first day I paddled away hard, went down some heavy rapids, was carried against sundry trees, and came to the conclusion that I had something very good between me and the river. At one time the whole bed seemed to be full of trees through which the torrent was hissing in a sufficiently unpleasant manner, and the paddle had to be shoved below while hands were used to force a way through. At last a tributary was reached which I fancied was Koopmans River, where there should be an hotel, so I

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paddled upstream a mile, only to find I was wrong, and so paddled back again as hard as ever till I sighted a large farmhouse—Vleesbank. Seeing people running down to have a look at us, I landed and we began to talk. By this time I felt thoroughly done, and was very glad to accept the hospitable invitation to stay the night; I even drank some brandy like so much water, though quite unaccustomed to spirits.

The fact was that I had been paddling continuously for about eight hours, had breakfasted very early, and had not given myself time to replenish my breadbasket, a mistake which I never made again.

The river wound about very much: for half an hour the sun would be in one's face and for the next on one's back. Time was wasted too in trying to find a practicable channel through the islands; so that by the road we had only come 12 miles from Wellington.

Second day. To Koopmans River, having a short swim in bitterly cold water on the way. Here the canoe was wheeled to the hotel, whence I wanted to have it carted to Vogel-vlei (3 or 4 miles long by 1 wide), lying some 4 miles off at the foot of the mountains. Unfortunately, however, a cart could not be got, so I walked there with my gun, and found any amount of duck on the water and flamingoes overhead, but without a boat nothing could be done.

Third day. Started at 8 a.m. for a day of considerable adventure, when I became acquainted with palmiet for the first time. It grows up with a straight root as thick as one's arm to some height and has a head something like a small aloe. As the roots

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do not interlace, the plants do not consolidate the ground between them. One cannot swim in it, nor can the canoe push her nose more than a foot into it in most places, while in flood-time the water and palmiet together provide varieties and combination of difficulties that would satisfy the greatest glutton. The river rushes into it, sinks in it, leaving possibly but one channel down which the canoe flies. Suddenly out pours another torrent from the palmiet, striking the canoe at right-angles and tending to roll her over, while the next instant she may be caught in an irresistible whirlpool, when the only plan is to let her spin round once and then with a strong stroke to come into the stream again. This may split up into smaller channels and the one followed may sink out of sight, so that every muscle must be strained to get back again. Sometimes, if paddling fails, the canoe has to be dragged up the edge of the palmiet by hauling on the plants.

In trying to stem these whirlpools at first I nearly upset the *Zephyr*, and should have done so had it not been for her extraordinary stability.

At one nasty place we shipped the only water during the trip, beyond a teacupful on two other occasions. Coming down a long reach with my gun between my knees, on the look-out for duck, of which great numbers would rise from among the bushes in the water, I saw palmiet stretching across the far end. I thought little of it till I found myself opposite the only open channel left—very narrow, hardly 5 yards wide, with a bank of water heaped up at its mouth. I jammed the gun below, tried to make the well-cover tight, seized the paddle, and was shot through the opening. I backed hard, for down in front was a derelict tree, lying against the

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palmiet, on to which we were instantly rushed, lodging us on the tree, broadside to the torrent which came pouring down on us. The gunwale was sucked down and a great lump of water poured in on us, as the well was not properly closed. We righted for a second and then were sucked down worse than before. We ought to have upset, but we didn't, though I feared we must go in another minute.

However, having clutched hold of the branches on the upper side, I dragged her over, without the water coming in at my back as seemed inevitable. We were now in the channel, rushing at right-angles to its original course. The paddle being useless and the canoe waterlogged, I lay down as low as possible and was dashed on to a bank of palmiet as the stream again abruptly changed its course. I seized hold of the plants for an instant to steady the canoe and prevent her being rolled over, and then, letting go, away we were swung to the opposite side. Then, seizing a chance, the paddle was set to work again and we reached a quiet spot where baling was possible.

The stores, being in waterproof bags, were not damaged.

Under similar conditions I would never again face that place, for had we been swamped, the canoe—bladders and all—would have been sucked under the branches, and though I have swum long distances with clothes on me or in a bundle on my head, yet swimming would most probably have proved useless here.

Not long afterwards I came to a rapid, where, as had more than once before occurred, the channel between rocks led directly on to, and through the top of, a small partly submerged tree. On one side

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was a dam of driftwood partly exposed above water. Instantly deciding to charge this, and putting on full speed, we ground through or jumped over, and down the drop below in capital style. So much for the objection so often urged, "Oh, but my good fellow, in the very first mile you will drive on to some rock, snag, or tree, and the unpleasant result will be a large hole in the canoe."

The tree most common was a species of acacia, but small as they were, they nevertheless proved awkward where the stream was strong. However, if the bow cleared them it mattered little how heavily the rest of the canoe swung on to them.

Later on, down a wide rapid, we struck hard and fast and I had to jump out. The sun having just set, I landed and prepared to camp. A man assisted me in lifting the *Zephyr* up a bank some 14 feet high. I had soon got a fire burning, and part of the day's sport plucked, had prepared some Liebig's soup, and tented the well of the canoe over with the waterproof skirt.

Having supped, I retired into the well and, the lantern being lit, settled myself to read. A party of Dutchmen came by turns to peer at the extraordinary animal inside the novel tent. They would not understand me and I could not understand them, so we grinned at one another instead. After they had left the dogs remained to bark at us in every sort of key. I then went to sleep comfortably on air cushions, the floorboard having previously been taken out to serve as a supper table. At 3 a.m. I awoke feeling very cold about the feet, whereupon the lantern was lit and put inside for a bit to serve as a stove.

Fourth day. I was up long before daylight and proceeded to make my toilet, have breakfast, wash-

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up, pack and get off. After an hour and half's paddle the roaring of a rapid was heard, and ere long the rapid was before us. The descent was half accomplished when the prospect in front seemed by no means pleasant, so, being able to land by aid of a back eddy, I proceeded to reconnoitre.

Looking at the difficulty in cold blood was by no means reassuring, for on this side the flood boiled over a pile of rocks, ploughing up such a wave as I had never yet seen in a river. On the far side the main current swept under overhanging trees, so that only a narrow space remained that might be practicable. To reach this, nicety of judgment was required, as heavy cross-currents were formed by an island above. Having settled it must be done, and once more in the canoe, the feeling of anxiety gave way to one of confidence. Striking diagonally across stream, I hit the exact spot, went bounding down over the waves, took a turn in the whirlpool below, and glided into calm water.

In a short time a large farmhouse—Bridgetown—appeared, and I stopped in order to improve my appearance by means of a swim and toilet before landing and making the acquaintance of some charming people. Here I stayed the day, did a little shooting in the evening, and started next morning with my linen and clothing department in a satisfactory state—the wretched " cords " had been mangled. This morning, in a little over three hours, I reached the fine iron bridge near Piquetberg.

In this part the river was studded in places with clay slate rocks, so sharp, that on jumping ashore barefooted to shoot pheasants (francolins) a piece was cut clean off the side of my foot, making the wearing of a boot painful for long afterwards.

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At the bridge a halt was made at the little inn for lunch, followed by another paddle of over three hours, when, seeing a wooded spot with plenty of dead wood lying about, I dragged the *Zephyr* over some fallen trees into a sheltered spot in thorough solitude. It was dark before there was a grand fire roaring, and soup and bird preparing for supper. After a fresh supply of water had been brought up and another stew prepared for breakfast which would only need warming, I proceeded to put on three pairs of woollen socks, an extra pair of trousers, thick coat and pea-jacket in the hope of keeping warm in spite of the frost. I was glad, however, to light the fire long before dawn and make an early start.

Sixth day. This was Sunday; so, having shot a brace of francolins for necessary food, I put the gun up in its waterproof case, and spent a pleasant day paddling on till nearly sunset, when I was unexpectedly and hospitably entertained at a farmhouse on the river. Here I ate for the first time a fair substitute for butter in the shape of fat from the tail of the fat-tailed sheep, which after being boiled down becomes soft and white.

That evening I had been much amused by the eagerness of the inhabitants of a large farm to view the apparition on the river. They kept on tumbling out of the house, farm buildings, and cottages like ants, for all the Dutchmen on the river have great families, young and old, and all shades and varieties of coloured servants more or less adorned with clothes.

The following day I reached, in five hours, Melck's farm, a fine place with a large horse-breeding establishment; and next day the family escorted me some way down the river in a four-oared boat. The

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river was now winding in a flat country with low banks fringed with rushes. Here the last hippopotamus within some hundreds of miles had been killed by Melck in front of his house about two years before, after the brute had just killed his black servant who was out bathing.

This day, the eighth, was also an easy one, as I only paddled four hours and a half, exclusive of stoppages. Having reached a trading station, the *Zephyr* was housed in a boathouse and I started to walk to Kotze's farm, said to be distant nearly one and a half hour's walk. As it would soon be dark and the track difficult to find, I decided to take a bee-line.

Shouldering my gun and bag, and with trousers tucked up and boots slung, I hurried off through two vleys, where duck and coot were getting up on all sides, and where the water reached well over the knees, making the tucking-up of trousers of no avail. The house was, however, reached in only half an hour, which was the time taken by the light cart on returning next morning.

Here I was most hospitably entertained, but could not accept the invitation to stop and shoot. The common domestic pig, not the ugly Boshvark of the Frontier, is allowed to run wild and in the winter is hunted on horseback with gun and dog. The riding is difficult, for the pig sticks to the flats along the river where water, mud, holes and bulrushes prove nasty at times. The fat pigs only are shot, and the young boars have to be caught and turned loose again. The animals are wild and fairly fierce and grow to a great size.

Ninth day. Near the mouth the wind was strong and ripple heavy, but as there were flocks of all

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kinds of duck, geese, and flamingoes, as well as pelican to be seen, the gun could not be laid aside. As the wind was fair the little mizen was set instead of the mainsail, and paddling quietly I went along merrily. That afternoon three duck of different sorts were bagged—higher up, owing to bushes and rushes, more were lost than picked up. At sunset a merchant residing at the mouth very kindly entertained me for two nights.

While here I did an interesting bit of stalking. A spit of land on the opposite shore had been pointed out as a favourite spot of a certain wild goose, so I said, "I will go and slay him." On landing, a solitary goose was seen which was at once stalked on the most approved principle. Lying still when he lifted his head, and crawling on when he dabbled, I got within 40 yards, when a creek stopped my onward crawl: the goose was then deliberately potted and a shout greeted the successful shot, from two boats on the river. On reaching the prey I said, "My fine sportsman, this is a very tame sort of wild goose, or wild sort of tame goose, or whatever else they call it." However, I paddled back in triumph, and handed the noble bird to the old housekeeper, who never, good soul, allowed a muscle of her face to change.

Immediately after my departure the party from the boats ran up and claimed their mother's favourite and fattest goose.

I had shot the wrong goose!

The sons were, however, delighted at the prospect of a feast and at once invested in good things that the rest of the repast might be in keeping.

On the afternoon of July 5 we were on board an 80-ton coaster for Cape Town. After a few hours the

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fair wind died out and we lay and rolled to an extent that did not suit me, the waist of the vessel rolling green water from side to side as she rolled, gunwale under, for twenty-four hours.

In consequence we were three days and nights at sea and, as my leave was up, people at Cape Town thought I had come to the grief which had been prophesied. We were going so slowly in Table Bay that when about 8 miles from shore I asked to be put off. However, the captain (a Norwegian) and first mate (a Dane)—good honest fellows—thought it so dangerous that they would only consent on my promising *faithfully* not to upset! Then with a hearty cheer I was speeded away.

It was curious to see the boldness of the great birds, Cape mollymawks and albatross, up to which one paddled. They would sit and stare me in the face till the bow nearly touched them, when they would flap past within reach of the paddle.

No part of the river, some 230 miles, had been shirked, except when by a portage of 200 yards near the mouth they said nearly two hours[1] paddle was saved.

Unfortunately there would not be nearly enough water in the summer without long portages to avoid palmiet, trees and bushes.

[1] In spite of the difficulties of this first trip on the Berg River I was eager to see it under other aspects, for having seen it in winter I was rather anxious to try it when there would be less water and the trees would have on their spring foliage. So, a few months later, a party having been made up for shooting on Vogel-vlei, I decided to try and take the *Zephyr* down the river as far as the hotel on Koopmans River, where

[1] Extract from *Cape Monthly Magazine*, November, 1872.

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we proposed staying. This part had, on the former occasion, not presented so many difficulties as that below Koopmans River, for some 50 miles; so that, provided there were enough water, one might hope to get down safely.

About the last week in September, starting by the early train for Wellington, the canoe was wheeled into the river at 11 a.m. Though the water was much lower than before, yet the current was stronger as the channel was more confined.

Most of the luggage had gone by road, so we were 40 lb. lighter than before, and in two hours we accomplished what then had taken three. We had, however, come along in a rather reckless manner.

I had brought the gun (secured to the canoe by a stout cord), in the hope of getting duck, and had just used it when it had to be shoved below, for on turning a sharp corner one of the bad places in the former trip came into view. Here the river rushed in a deep narrow channel, having a bank of palmiet on one side, and a dense growth of overhanging trees on the other, while a short distance down, the course was obstructed by a fallen tree, which now quite blocked it.

On my first trip I had grasped the palmiet, pressing the canoe firmly against it, and, letting the craft cautiously down, had passed through the upper branches of the submerged tree. Now, however, I caught hold of the branches of an overhanging tree to stop our way, thinking there was just room to swing, but there was not. The stern swung round on to the palmiet and the bow could not clear the branches, so the torrent rolled us over. Then, though full of water, she righted, and I seized her, but as the gun was dragging, over she went again,

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and my hold had to be shifted to the keel, when we were instantly dashed into that tree.

The poor *Zephyr*, like myself, fought hard to keep her nose above water, but down she was driven, bladders and all, making much noise as she continued her course under water through the tree. I had grasped a bough, but as the current was pouring over my shoulders, and my legs were somewhat entangled in the branches, it required a strong effort to drag myself on to the trunk, whence I was able to retrieve the paddle and scramble ashore. Here I found myself the possessor of a tattered shirt, of a hat and torn trousers, and with but the faintest prospect of seeing any of that valuable property now floating down the river.

The only thing to be done was to get on quickly, but how ?

The branches were so close together that it seemed hopeless, especially as I was barefoot. I dragged myself along the branches, half in and half out of the water for a bit, then threw myself into the bushes, to make a hole the length of my body, repeating this till it proved that I was on an island.

Eventually a bit of the stream was found sufficiently clear to give a fair chance of swimming across. Although only about 10 yards wide, the prospect, encumbered as I was with the paddle, did not seem inviting as I might be hurried down below the proposed landing spot. However, this was duly reached and I pushed along, until the *Zephyr* was seen, hung up, at another small island. The long paddle was now useful, as by its means a bearing was obtained across the branches, giving a firm hold for the hands in crossing two narrow intervening channels.

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It was difficult to get near the canoe, for she lay out of my depth, in a very strong stream, being, as it proved, anchored by the gun, whose breech had opened, catching a small branch. When cleared she could not possibly have been held had not the bow and stern ropes been secured to trees. In the meanwhile the boathook and one of the wheels floated out of the well downstream. There was no shore, so I had to stand waist-deep and bail with my hat till it was reduced to pulp—then I tried a boot, and finally a sponge, till my back ached, and the melancholy conviction was at last forced upon me that no more of my belongings were hiding among the bladders.

My money and sundry little things in the cartridge bag were safe, also my boots and coat, as they had been strapped on; but the waistcoat and gold watch were gone, also the waterproof cape enclosing some linen.

The gun was hauled up in a curious condition—the hammers had been driven down from half-cock, the nose of the sear in each case having been broken off. Both cartridges had of course exploded and one barrel burst. Both barrels were bent, cut and scratched, one hammer was gone, and the pin of the cartridge shorn off as if with a chisel. The blows against trees and rocks must have been most heavy, yet the *Zephyr* was absolutely sound and I got in again more pleased with her than ever.

It was an awkward place to start from, and the chances of capsize were only less than before because I was keenly on the watch against such an occurrence. The paddle might be dropped for an instant, and boughs seized—then a strong stroke or two given hurriedly, paddle and head kept low, and we would

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shoot through a small opening, in trees, in what would seem very lucky style.

Ere long this channel dived into bushes, so thick, that even those independent voyagers, the wheel and boathook, were waiting to be taken on board again! Now we had to get back by hauling on the branches, yet another channel proved impracticable, and finally a tiny channel led to a shallow stream along shore, down which we bumped a dozen times before regaining the main channel.

So it went on for the next three hours, hardly a moment's repose for mind or body, the river hissing along among trees and rocks and round the most uncomfortably sharp corners. Down one of the very narrow channels I went to work with my useful knife, but had to give it up and, turning round in the canoe, had to cut my way back again stern foremost. Getting back from these positions was disagreeable. The current was always too strong or too confined for the paddle to be of much use. All the boughs, brambles and snags were directed downstream against us, and by hauling on boughs, especially round corners, one ran risk of capsizing in so strong a stream.

Going down one heavy rapid, where the river was studded thick with rocks, a clear course could not be steered, and on driving hard on to one rock we were instantly swung across another. I jumped out on to this, and with difficulty making a fresh start, successfully negotiated the usual abominable corner at the foot of the rapid, where the chances appeared either of driving into a tree or of swinging broadside on to something else.

Soon after this we came to a spot which I recognized. A certain narrow opening in palmiet had to

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be entered, and then one would see what was to be seen—something not pleasant this time, judging from what it had been on the former occasion. There was a quiet spot above, and I lay and soliloquized as was my wont: "You old idiot!" (I always address myself in such terms on these occasions: it is reassuring). "You would come down this very curious river a second time in spite of the warnings of kind friends who are sure to say, 'We told you so,' and now you are in a funk—you know you are." It was evident that the sooner we entered the opening the better.

Below, the waves were leaping and dancing and the *Zephyr* leaped and danced too, grinding over one ledge of rock where was a little fall, and flying to the foot of the rapid at an astonishing rate. Here we rested a few minutes, a large farmhouse being near, whose inhabitants expressed unbounded astonishment. They did not, however, pronounce me to be the "River Bull," as did certain boys on the first trip, who fled in terror, declaring they had seen the River Bull—whatever animal that may be supposed to be. Nor did they do as some native women at a Mission station who rushed into the house crying, "Master, master, there's the Devil coming out of the palmiet." No doubt the blades of the paddle appearing one after the other above the palmiet were the horns of the Evil One! No, these Dutchmen merely gaped and chorused "Almachtig!" as one fact after another dawned on them.

We then entered trees again, but were at once blocked, so I had to turn round in the canoe facing the stern and haul back to the entrance of the narrow channel, where I hung on to the last bush available. The plan was to give a strong pull on the

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bush to drive ahead as far as possible, drop the bough, seize the paddle, and work. Yes, work one's very hardest to get only 2 yards round the corner. Not once only, but four times were we driven back, having again to drop the paddle, seize the last bough, wait a bit and try again, for the men on the high bank were powerless to help.

At last the corner was turned, the shore reached, the river left and the *Zephyr* put on her wheels.

My appearance was probably peculiar, hat shapeless, shirt in rags, trousers decidedly gone, feet and hands and arms cut and scratched considerably. General reflections: never do it again.

Most of my luncheon had disappeared, but not in the way intended, so some milk from the farm proved acceptable. Afterwards a man helped to wheel the canoe to another farm where an invitation to stay the night was gratefully accepted. Next morning off at 5 a.m. with a small native boy to help in wheeling 5 miles to Vleesbank.

After breakfast we were driven to Koopmans River hotel, where a gun was borrowed, and then with the rest of the party we were driven to Vogelvlei. The sport on the whole was poor during our three days; and though we mustered some dozen guns, including local farmers, the "gun" in the canoe which was sometimes lent to others got nearly as much as all the others put together. The fact was that the birds were not shy of the canoe as of the large black boat; nor did they often come near the guns posted on the rocky islands, where was no sort of cover.

My third trip was to have been a very ambitious one, right round the Cape Peninsula with its many miles of rock-bound coast. The canoe had, under

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paddle, successfully encountered "South-easters" with heavy seas on several occasions, and had proved herself to be a fine sea-boat.

I had intended to enter the mouth of the little Leesbeck stream, but found the breakers so unpleasantly heavy, that after being nearly turned over, a return homewards was made.

Defeat being, however, decidedly unpleasant, I lay off the shore at another point and long and carefully studied the run of the breakers, and finally came in successfully, some friendly bare-legged fishermen rushing in to pull the *Zephyr* clear of the backwash. Then I flew down a lagoon under sail to the Leesbeck, up which it was a struggle to Rondebosch, where the Lemprieres kindly housed me and the *Zephyr*. I went on next day by cart to Kalk Bay, whence I sailed in half a gale to Simons Town. Here, unfortunately, a gale blew for three days, and I then had to return to Cape Town.

It may be mentioned that a young officer had a canoe sent out from England to accompany mine, but found conditions too risky for it, and so the *Zephyr* had no companion.

Major Lempriere, R.E., had come out to Grahamstown with General Hay, his father-in-law, as Military Secretary. As he had stood for Millais' famous picture of "The Huguenots" he created special interest. He and his wife were a striking couple and made me quite one of the family at the Cape and at Aldershot, electing me as "Uncle" to their four daughters.

Exploring the mountains round Cape Town was a joy, though as no Climbing Club then existed I could not get a companion. One got into awkward situations in descending Devil's Peak on the Rondebosch

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side and elsewhere, but the most interesting event was my first finding a way over the "Neck." The lowest point seemed the natural crossing place, where a grassy slope grew steeper and steeper, entailing great caution.

Crawling very carefully I found it ended abruptly in precipitous rock, which was hidden from the view of anyone studying the ground from Rondebosch below, owing to the stunted trees and bushes which grew out of the crannies. Crawling up again, I found an easy way down on the Table Mountain side of the Neck, and made a sketch of a striking group of rocks at that point.

Shortly afterwards, when Major Adams of the Royal County Down Regiment said he was going across, having carefully studied the ground from Rondebosch, I warned him of the difficulty and gave him the sketch. Next night at Mess he thanked me for having probably saved his life, for he was within an ace of going over the cliff.

A fortnight later, a young Collegiate decided to cross over from Cape Town. He had a bad fall and found himself lodged head-down in a small tree on the face of the cliff, his hat and stick being in a bush above him. He could just remember some grass breaking away in his grasp.

All efforts at getting back that evening failed, and it was with great difficulty that he at last succeeded next day, finding his way down by my line. His head and face were so swollen that he was unrecognizable.

Once on Table Mountain, having taken my jump for a flat bit of rock below, I saw a cobra coiled up on it. Landing on one foot, I stood rigid while the cobra uncoiled and slid away.

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The ascent of Lion's Head was not easy for a short man. In 1899 I found chains to assist climbers had been fixed at the spot where I had made it.

On one occasion Majors Lempriere and Durnford, R.E. (who was killed at Iswandlana), took me in a Cape-cart from Simons Bay to Cape Point, distant 17 miles, on a very hot day over a deep sand track. Durnford's deerhound was soon exhausted and had to be taken on board, and I walked more than half the way. Arrived at the lighthouse, the driver said the horses could not start again till sundown, so I decided to take a bee-line over the hills and inform Mrs. Lempriere. The hills proved complicated, but where possible I ran, till getting brain-weary I made for the sea and went in to rouse myself, but nearly fell asleep in the surf. I quickly tumbled out and, fearing to fall asleep while dressing, did not wait to put on my socks. My friends had reached Simons Town two hours before (the horses having quickly recovered) and saw me coming along fast in the moonlight. They thought to give me a surprise, but, taking no notice of them, I walked half-asleep to the hotel bar, drank a glass of neat brandy and at once fell asleep. Roused for supper, I ate and fell asleep—roused for bed, I found myself next morning on the floor, with one boot off and candle burnt out, having never got to bed. However I was perfectly fit again. My mind had been so set at getting in by a certain time in spite of obstacles, that a brain-condition resulted such as never again was experienced.

I had been much concerned about the defences of Simons Bay, the important Naval Station, believing that its big coal depot could be shelled from

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the rugged hills at the back by a surprise landing in Hout Bay. Every one denied that sailors could drag guns up, so I said, "If my horse can get up, will you agree that it is possible?"—"Yes; but no horse can get up."

Soon after this, after visiting Wynberg I rode on with my elderly Clerk of the Works to Hout Bay to show him the W.D. boundaries. Leaving our horses to graze, a little stream had to be crossed which I proposed to ford, carrying my elderly companion.

Knowing, however, the presence of quicksands on that part of the Peninsula, I proceeded to test the bottom first, and in two steps sunk deep in a quicksand, but within reach of Gregory's outstretched hand. We therefore returned to our horses, and with a prophecy of disaster in my ears I started alone for the climb.

Soon the only visible track through the thick bush near the shore was found to have been closed by the property-owner, with heavy thorn bushes tied together. I had no knife, and could not untie the hard knots, so crept round to the far side, hoping to do better. Ruby, however, showed great anxiety to come to me, so I called him. He went at the obstruction with all his heart and strength, till, in spite of thorns and branches and cords, he got through and over, very pleased to rejoin me.

Then the hill began, and most awkward it was. Frequently it was quite impossible to lead the horse, and he had to be left to himself to struggle to some spot and wait for me to point out the direction of the next scramble. On reaching the top, Ruby was in a perfect lather and not so lively as at first, but we got safely down to Simons Town.

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The I.G.F. at the War Office considered the information valuable.

My horse, Ruby, developed an extraordinary affection for me. Once a party was riding on the "flats," and as we were cantering along, some one said, "We have heard such wonderful things of your horse—what can he do?"—"Well, suppose I vault off and run alongside: then you fellows whip up into a gallop with as much noise as you like. I will stop and he will stay with me."

"You promise not to speak to him or touch him?"—"Certainly, not the faintest sign will be given."

Now this experiment had never been tried before, and the horse was very fresh, for as I ran alongside he was tossing his head and playfully biting at me. Suddenly they all shouted, whipped into a gallop, and away went Ruby with them, but only for a few strides. He then stopped, looked round, and trotted proudly back to me.

"Well," they said, "we want to see nothing more, we believe all the stories told of him."

The road between Cape Town and Wynberg was then absolutely different to what it was on my return in 1899, for one could canter or gallop almost the whole way on the soft. There was no tramway, and very few houses, except at Rondebosch.

Colonel Page kept a pack of hounds at Rondebosch for buck-hunting on the Cape Flats, about which I wrote that "ample excitement in its way was provided in floundering over holes and molehills, plunging into or over bushes, struggling through small quicksands in the little streams, and fancying one's horse must come to grief, which he never does. The country looks flat; but one may lose sight of

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hounds and horsemen in an extraordinary way, when not even standing straight up on the saddle to look over the bushes proves of much use."

About this time came a W.O. order that Infantry were to be put through a course of Field-work instruction under the R.E. whenever possible, and application was accordingly made to me. The reply was that no R.E. was available as I was alone, with no N.C.O. or Sapper at the station, and that the Field-work ground at Wynberg was 8 miles from my office. The General and Colonel Jerome, with whom I was very intimate, pressed me so that I agreed.

As the Regulations did not admit of travelling expenses within a 10-mile radius, both the General, and the " Comptroller " who represented the S.S.W., stated that all absolutely necessary out-of-pocket expenses should be repaid. This was done, but months afterwards the Treasury threw over the agreement and made me refund the modest sum in question.

Office work had to be done before breakfast, then I had to ride to Wynberg at a hand-gallop and work till 3 p.m., teaching how to use pick and shovel and, in my shirt-sleeves, how to pitch cleanly out of deep ditches when making redoubts. Then came a canter back to office to finish work there.

Three months of this in hot weather made my horse a trifle thin.

It may now be time to revert to my haunted chamber in the Castle. The approach to it was along a long dark passage ending in my quarters, which consisted of a large room with a heavy-beamed ceiling, and a bedroom opening into it. Opposite my doors was a closed staircase by which

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the murderess was said to have descended into the Governor's quarters.

I had been there nearly a year, when one night I awoke under a sense of fear. Looking through the open bedroom door I saw a woman in grey, crouched on the floor, and a dog on its haunches glaring at me. Now there are two ways of dealing with such a situation: one is to hide one's head under the clothes, and wish for the day—the other is to jump out of bed out of the line of those eyes. Adopting the latter procedure, I seized the boot-jack, screwed myself up and entered the doorway. My impression was that the figures disappeared; but in any case I went back to bed thoroughly ashamed of myself. Then, closing my eyes and again opening them, an effort was made to conjure up what had been imagined; but in vain. Then I looked at the time: 12 midnight—I thought of all I had eaten, drunk, read, or heard that day, but everything had been normal—I was in perfect health, and had never given a thought to the room being haunted.

Deciding that it must have been a queer delusion, I did not propose mentioning it, but at the Regimental Mess that night the subject of ghosts was started, so I said, "I suppose you will say that I saw a ghost last night." On learning the facts they all declared, "But that was the ghost, and it is just a year since Boulcott and Jackson, very late at night, saw the woman in grey pass right through that room."

But now follows the remarkable part, which the Psychical Society, in writing to me years afterwards, said was the most convincing case in their records.

Government House, distant a mile from the Castle,

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had never been haunted, yet three days later, as the Governor's daughter was going downstairs to the carriage, she passed a woman on the stairs, and asked the butler who she was, describing her as dressed in grey. The butler and footman both declared that no woman had passed, so she entered her carriage, much disturbed in mind. Then the butler went upstairs and knocked at the Military Secretary's door. "Come in," said S.—"Oh! beg pardon, sir, I did not know you were engaged," said the man, shutting the door. "I'm not engaged," shouted S., who, seeing the man much disturbed, asked him what was the matter. "Why, sir, I saw a woman standing behind your chair."

Early in February, 1873, I went for my fourth canoe trip, 400 miles from Cape Town. As I paddled ashore from the steamer in Mossel Bay I narrowly escaped being upset by the surf on the way. Ere long, however, the *Zephyr* was safely stowed on a bullock wagon, while I preceded her, in a passenger cart, to George Town, distant about 45 miles.

This is a pretty open village, well planted with trees, lying near the foot of the mountains. Here I stayed a couple of days, meeting, to my great pleasure, Duthie, whom I formerly knew at Grahamstown as an officer in the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police, but who was now in the altogether different line of an ostrich farmer. In the Koranna War which was successfully carried out by this Force, under my old friend Sir Walter Currie, Duthie was taking aim with his rifle, when a bullet struck the muzzle, full and square. This doubtless saved his life, though the splash of the metal cut him badly about the face. I saw the rifle, with its damaged muzzle, on his return from that expedition.

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Having, by the aid of the Magistrate, hired two Kaffirs to carry my traps and wheel the canoe, we walked 16 miles to present ourselves at the English-looking house of Mr. Dumbleton, who most kindly put me up. Near his house was a chain of small lakes, the largest about 5 miles by 3.

Here, at Oakhurst, several very enjoyable days were spent. We sailed about, fished, shot, sketched, fed the ostriches, and bathed at a delicious waterfall close to the house.

One day I paddled up the river Touw, which flows into one end of the lakes, and on the way encountered a grass fire raging on both sides of the stream, so that it was uncommonly hot work paddling the gauntlet.

The scenery, as the heart of the forest was reached, was delightfully fine and weird: the steep tree-clad slopes with the tangled foliage, mazes of monkey-ropes, showers of green and yellow mosses streaming from the trees—the brilliantly coloured louries softly flitting from tree to tree—all this made one feel that the true beauties of the country could hardly be known except in this way.

Ere long, however, the Touw resolved itself into small rivulets tearing down the wooded kloof, and we had to turn back.

Night was fast closing in, and with some difficulty a spot was found where the *Zephyr* could be drawn ashore and a fire made. Now came the unpleasant task of groping among the tangled growth for dry wood, with the thought of a snake suggesting itself rather uncomfortably now and then. Soon a bright fire changed the aspect of things, lighting up the great yellow wood trees festooned with hanging mosses and monkeyropes.

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The duck I had shot was soon stewing, the coffee prepared, and supper commenced, to a musical accompaniment of a pair of screaming eagles, and a swarm of singing mosquitoes. The bites of the latter have little effect on me, so when once asleep I passed a good night.

When taking my morning dive into the deep pool, I was surprised to find the bottom water distinctly warmer than the surface; though why, I could not make out. This day we returned through the lakes to push on to the Knysna River, and having to land between two lakes, I lightened my labours by setting sail with a fair wind, and we got on famously, much to the astonishment of natives, who had not previously seen sails gliding through the grass.

On the large lake it was blowing stiff with a heavy ripple. I then found there was more deck hamper than was convenient, owing to my portmanteau, which had to be stowed on the after-deck, and in consequence steering became somewhat wild. After a struggle through tall reeds at the head of the last lake and another short land journey at its foot, I was hospitably entertained at a farm. The next day I was despatched on a horse with two "boys" to wheel and carry.

After a time the track became so deep and sandy that the painter was fastened to the saddle and so, fording the Gowkama, we travelled gaily along. *En route* the steersman had driven against the small root of a tree, breaking it off, but piercing a hole in the canoe, thus affording for the first time an opportunity to use the repairing kit. A patch of waterproof sheeting was clapped on with india rubber solution, with a stitch at each corner to keep it in

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position till dry. This repair always remained perfectly sound.

After 15 miles the Knysna was seen, winding through the wooded undulations at our feet, then widening out among low islands into a fairly broad estuary before passing to the ocean, through a narrow channel bounded by high, picturesque rocks, the perfection of a river for canoe sailing. Here a hearty welcome greeted me from the Duthies, and here we remained, for they positively refused to let me go on to the Kuerboem River as I had proposed. The argument raised time and again was unanswerable: that I was not likely to enjoy myself better there: nor, indeed, was I, for here each day had its own fresh enjoyment in some form or other. Moreover, the great risks to be encountered in the breakers on the bars were also strongly urged, so that though the *Zephyr* was once actually on its wheels ready to start, nothing came of it.

One night a party was arranged for eel fishing, 9 miles up the river, in the forest, whither the canoe was to take me, the others riding. On my way up some good specimens of birds were secured, including the Great African Kingfisher, to be set up later. I reached the scene of the great forest fire of 1868, which had raged over a tract of, roughly, 250 miles along the coast. That season had been exceedingly hot and dry, and the rivers had been powerless to stop the fire under the strong wind.

It was getting dark as I passed among blackened trees and landed at a spot which had escaped the great fire, but which recently had been blazing. A thick ash lay on the ground, grand trees lay prone, still glowing, while deep white-hot caverns in the roots testified to the fierceness of such a forest fire.

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It began to rain heavily. My friends did not appear, so, as darkness had settled down, I cooked my supper at the edge of one of these natural furnaces. The weirdness of the scene was very striking —gaunt upstanding broken trunks, a faint glow, and steam, on one side and the other, and an absolute silence save for the hissing of rain falling on the smouldering timber.

After supper I started to return. In the rain and dense darkness it was impossible to avoid driving into wet boughs. On one occasion this was followed by an uncanny exclamation of "Ha! Ha!" close to my ear. Later, the same was accompanied by the sound of wings, and I learnt afterwards that it was a Glossy Ibis that had thus introduced itself. The best plan of getting along was by looking straight up at the sky and paddling on in faith. The faintest light between the tree-tops would give approximately the centre of the river.

Next night the expedition actually did come off. I joined it high up where the river was but a succession of deep rocky pools. As I approached I saw a bright fire blazing on the edge of a pool lighting up the cliffs on the far side, while the near forest was in deep gloom.

About midnight my friends started home, more than one urging me to take a lift behind him, but I preferred camping out.

Sundry eel-lines were rebaited, more wood piled on the fire, and with a stone for a pillow I went to sleep. I was awakened by the rattle—rattle—plunge—of rocks falling from the cliff and then found it to be raining. My side farthest from the fire was about wet through, so I turned over to dry it by the fire and fell asleep again. I was

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wakened a second time by heavy rustling in the forest behind me and saw the fire was burning low. Now only the night before, close to this spot, an elephant had forced two woodcutters to fly from their suppers, and take refuge in a tree where they remained some hours. The few elephants in the Knysna forest were preserved by the Government, and I had failed to obtain permission to shoot one if he came to the river near me, but I had brought a few cartridges of special loading in case of a hippo or other big beast on the Kuerboem River.

The gun was duly loaded by my side, but I lay low and devoutly prayed that I might never see an elephant. When all was quiet, the fire was made up afresh, and was alight next day when the weather turned fine.

On moving the pillow a couple of scorpions were found to have taken refuge under it from the rain. After a savoury breakfast of fried eel, and regretfully leaving so romantic a spot, I went to the canoe which had been left some way down, and returned home. That afternoon I rode out shooting with a couple of useful dogs, and the first buck that jumped up in the long grass was dropped dead, the pony proving steady as a rock. I got two more, but he took much persuasion to carry the third.

These buck were of a small species. On performing the usual cleaning operation on the last one I foolishly cut the knuckle of my forefinger to the bone, the knife having slipped. However, paddling in salt water soon cured it, though the finger did not get quite straight for some years.

On sailing across to church, one Sunday, before a strong breeze we ran upon a bank which was submerged a few inches. The mast went by the board,

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but the deck, being specially strengthened at this point, was not damaged.

A fortnight was spent most pleasantly, boating, sketching, shooting, fishing with line and net in sea and river, and in learning a little about ostrich-farming, which is one of the most promising occupations in the Cape, and steadily on the increase.

At last I said good-bye to my friends and acquaintances and turned back by the way I had come.

Arrived at the Gowkama, I paddled up into the middle of the forest, further progress repeatedly appearing to be barred, but on pushing through each obstacle, one lovely little scene after another opened out. At last I had to turn back and the *Zephyr* was on her wheels once more, and by the second day we reached the lakes. I had landed and was crossing an ostrich enclosure to visit a farm, when a cock bird rushed down fiercely upon me. On my vaulting over the rails out of his way, his rage was ludicrous to behold. When I returned, two natives judged it necessary to escort me, the old bird making several warlike demonstrations which were, however, easily frustrated by pushing a small branch in his face. Their kick forward is certainly one to be avoided.

While in the Knysna district I had received orders for England and was to travel by a certain steamer from Cape Town. At Oakhurst a letter reached me saying that this steamer would not call at Mossel Bay, so the only chance of getting back was by road, and therefore the poor *Zephyr* had to be disposed of.

On this trip she had actually travelled 70 miles on her own wheels.

Having reached George Town I stayed with

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Archdeacon Fogg two days, awaiting the mailcart, and thus had time to visit the remarkable waterfall of Cuyman's Yat, or Alligator's Hole, as its name implies.

My host had pressed me to take provender for the drive of 350 miles, but, thinking we should surely stop at some town long enough to snatch a morsel, I would only take a little packet of two cold chops which he kindly forced into my hand, which I was grateful for later. The Mail is not really a passenger cart, though it can take three passengers. There are no cushions, and as there was then no other passenger I had to occupy the very uncomfortable back seat in order to make a proper balance.

We started off when night was coming on, and soon rain fell on my unprotected head. The driver had a habit, without a word of warning, of lashing the horses into a gallop at the foot of any hill, so that I should have been shot off behind, any number of times, had I not been holding on hard all the time.

The pair of horses were changed every 12 to 18 miles, and the driver every 80 to 100. At the end of 100 miles another man was taken up, so I had a welcome change to the front seat. Fifty miles further and one was beginning to get sleepy, when excitement occurred in the shape of two runaway young horses.

On approaching a station the drivers used to urge their team into a gallop, but this pair required no urging, for when within 1½ miles of their stable, off they dashed. Disdaining the road, they bounded across the ditch and then across the veldt, and what with holes, mounds, bushes, and old cart tracks it was no marvel that, on looking back to

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see how my fellow-traveller liked it, a very pale face and hands, grimly clutched, met my eyes. At last the horses were got into the road, with every caution, but instantly, plunging madly, they left it again, the cart being within an ace of capsizing. Yet once again we saved her by throwing our weight to the top side as we came against an anthill.

The horses were now simply wild and not merely running for their stable, so when they were finally pulled up they were taken out and the driver started to lead them, leaving the cart on the veldt. As a vley was not far off we thought this a good chance for an ablution of sorts; but when this was over I said, "Where's the cart?"—"Oh, there she is," said my Colonial companion.—"I don't see her."—"I do," again he said, pointing to something that certainly did look rather like a cart, but which resolved itself into a bush as we ran towards it. I feared it was a case of "good-bye" to my steamer, but we made a hard run for it as a last chance, and fortunately gained a hill, where the driver saw us just in time. He had soon mounted the quieted pair, ridden in fast, galloped out, and not finding us had thought we had gone on to the station. But as he did not overtake us he had turned back a bit, but had just decided not to lose any more time with the mails.

When we reached Swellendam, the chief town of the district, I ran into an hotel and ordered coffee and eggs. They appeared remarkably quickly, but only as the horn and rattle of that abominable cart was heard. Clutching my two eggs, I mounted, and one was irretrievably smashed in the ascent.

There were now two passengers behind and we got along briskly enough, but on the next stage, as

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night was drawing on, the Malay driver got savage, possibly because of having three passengers. He twice deliberately drove against a boulder in order, apparently, to jerk one of those behind off his seat. One man then threatened to pistol him, and as the fellow seemed up to any devilry I expected soon to have to catch him by the throat, but the pistol sobered him a bit. In the dark and on the cross-track which the driver insisted on taking, it was impossible for us to drive and find the way. At the next station we debated whether to thrash him; but to avoid complications we merely reported him, and were given a fresh driver.

As we came down Sir Lowry's Pass the view of False Bay, encircled by mountains, was very grand.

By the time I reached Cape Town I had travelled 350 miles in forty-two hours, bumping along, with no sleep and very little food. I was glad to tub and feed, and then without a moment's repose I hurried off to pay some hasty farewell calls, before embarking for England the next day.

I joined Elsdale on the steamer, also bound for England with his sister and her friend, who had come out some time previously to work for Bishop Webb.

I was welcomed at Southampton by my young brother, C.K., who had also joined the R.E.

In 1872 we had lost our dear mother, who had been to each one of us all that a mother could be; and whose memory remained ever fresh with us even to old age.

Well may the poet say:

"Happy he with such a mother, faith in womankind
Beats with his blood, and trust in all things pure
Comes easy to him; and though he slip and fall,
He shall not blind his soul with clay."

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CHAPTER V

HOME SERVICE—MANŒUVRES AND BUILDING BARRACKS—1873–6

After two months' leave I was posted as senior Subaltern to the 32nd Company R.E. at Chatham, Leonard Darwin, son of the famous Darwin, and in late years President of the R.G.S., being the other Subaltern.

About this time the R.E. Officers' team had been carrying all before it in the Association football world. The *Saturday Review* had instanced its successes as a proof that brains and athleticism can perfectly exist together.

The number of officers, serving at home, from which to choose, was very limited, yet one year we won the "Cup" against the whole of Great Britain, and twice were in the Final.

Of the team one might mention Renny-Tailyour, who, besides being a fine cricketer, represented Scotland, both in Association and Rugby "Cup" competitions. The "Wing" pair of Von Donop and my brother also made a powerful combination. I heard a lad at the Oval say of the former, "Look at him, just look! He's the best drizzler (*sic*) in England." And again on the occasion of a "Cup" tie at the Oval, when C.K. was not playing, an old General groaned, "Ah, Wood, we wanted your brother's leg here."

My company was sent to Cannock Chase to prepare

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the ground for the Autumn Manœuvres of 1873. The most important work was in connection with water supply.

My Captain gave me half the company to work with, over a large area. In a few days the G.O.C. with his staff and C.R.E. came round, and remarked what a pity it was that it was impossible to make use of a large pond, which was cut off from the road by a wide belt of deep bog. I said nothing then, but set to work to construct a wide solid road which was ready in time for the concentration.

The Manœuvres commenced, and my side, whatever success we may have thought was ours, had generally to retire before H.S.H. Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar. Now the orders for the following day frequently came out late at night. One evening I did not see them as I had already retired to bed, intending to start out very early the next morning. I had to write a report on the next day's operations and wished to sketch the country we had held.

Riding out to one of our redoubts where we had effectively held up our enemy, I began sketching, sitting on my little thoroughbred, hired from a local veterinary surgeon, and a wonder over that very trappy, heather-covered country.

Ere long a hostile Guards Regiment marched up the hill and an officer with a mounted orderly came towards me—just to pass the time of day, as I thought, before operations began. Instead of such friendly procedure, many examples of which occurred in the Peninsular War, the officer took hold of my bridle and said, "You are my prisoner." Oh! what a fool I thought myself, but, showing no concern, smiled pleasantly on him and said that I proposed going on with my sketch. This I pretended to do

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while racking my brains for a comfortable solution of this desperate situation.

In reply to his next remark, I gently asked how it was possible that he, on foot, and the trooper, on that class of horse, could have caught my thoroughbred unless I had desired converse with him. If he could be flustered a little, the chances of escape might be bettered. He replied, "Don't you know that you are in the middle of our ground?"—"No, I don't," I said while I still went on pretending to sketch.—"Don't you know that all this was given over to us last night, and that no one is to come within 100 yards of one of the other side?"—"Then why did you come within 100 yards of me?" This bowled him out, and he regretfully turned back with his big orderly. Before, however, he reached his battalion, it seemed wise to close the sketch, so turning my horse back down the slope, we were out of sight in a few leisurely strides, and then I galloped to my chief with a queer story.

The Troops had become so keen that some very realistic scenes occurred before the "100 yards order" was issued!

From Cannock Chase the company went to build Maryhill Barracks near Glasgow. Here there was an outcrop of coal, but the mine surveys showed no galleries under the W.D. property. However, after the married quarters were built, two ends collapsed owing to the sinking of the ground due to some unrecorded galleries under our land. As no contractor would undertake to underpin, the Sappers executed this dangerous job.

Ere long I was ordered to Guildford, which was fortunate for me as I had been housed in a just-finished and plastered quarter which had never been

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dried. Everything was sodden in that damp climate, the backs of the picture frames burst off, and sheets were simply impossible. There was little wonder that, once more, I was attacked by rheumatic gout, which disappeared on my going south.

The orders for Guildford came about on this wise: Major Percy Smith, one of our most talented R.E.'s, had been told off to build Guildford Brigade Barracks without a contractor—an entirely new departure. However, before starting he was given a good appointment, and then recommended me. My office at first was at the Horse Guards, and my duty was to examine many tenders for bricks. These were so preposterously high that I reported that none should be accepted, but that I should visit Guildford with authority to buy on the spot. A paltry 100,000 was sanctioned, while we required nearly 4,000,000.

Having bought four times the number authorized, at most reasonable prices, I was also able to report that one good brickyard close to barracks was prepared to supply all requirements, at a rate far below any of the original tenders. I asked that this most satisfactory offer be accepted without delay, otherwise a Railway Company would get it, but the Contract Department decided again to call for tenders! I went up to the War Office and overcame objections, though fearing it was too late, which unfortunately proved to be the case.

So the first requirement, bricks, was in a hopeless condition. They had to be got from Reading, Brentford, etc., entailing very heavy transport cost. That, however, was not the end of the trouble, for the bricks varied in gauge from 10½ inches to nearly 13 inches, necessitating the employment of several

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different gauges for the moulds, in which the artificial stone was cast, suitable local stone being unprocurable.

When nearly at the end of the job Colonel B. came to see me, as it was proposed that he should undertake another big work in the Midlands without a contractor. On learning how badly I had been hampered, he would have nothing to do with it.

As the town was 2 miles distant, I made shift to live in the small four-roomed office hut, into which, however, a piano could just be squeezed. Then, as I not unfrequently had to walk 12 miles in the evening after the works had closed, in order to visit various yards, I bought a very promising young Irish horse, and trained him to jump of his own accord, by coming for his feeds over rails, which were raised progressively. He had, however, very peculiar moods, and sometimes would not jump the smallest ditch. Coming home one evening across a common, such a ditch stopped him and at last a battle royal resulted. An old gentleman watching me said, "You ought to be ashamed of yourself treating a beautiful horse like that." I replied in a courteous tone, "No doubt you are an estimable old gentleman, but you don't know this horse. If he beats me, he is worthless; but if I beat him, he will be a grand horse."

Having at last blindfolded him, and with the aid of a plucky old woman who beat him behind with a gorse-bush, we got over with a stumble, and then resumed friendly relations as soon as possible.

Soon after this he saw the Surrey Union hounds for the first time, and refused at the first low rails. That first covert was drawn blank, so hounds went on, but we remained. Fortunately the next covert

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was drawn blank and the Field came back past us. Then, making a virtue of necessity, the top rail was removed and we passed over what was left.

Eventually a fox was found on the top of a hill, and on getting the horse out of the ruck of the Field, riding the line of gates, he charged down the hill, over the fence with a drop into a road, straight over again up a desperate bank that seemed impossible. "If I can't steady him before that sharp bend in the field, we shall slip up," was my reflection, and, sure enough, down he slipped smack on his side, but I was in the saddle again as he rose.—Away again, the huntsman only in front, who passed through a gap in a fence, not uncommon in Surrey, consisting of ditch, bank with nut-growth on it, and another similar bank with growth, and far ditch. When at the gap the horse swerved sharp down the near ditch, causing me to throw my head right back on the saddle and await developments. Bursting almost immediately, left-handed, through both hedges, we landed clear in the field with hounds, carrying a substantial bough in front of the saddle. Involuntarily I shouted out, "You will do," and from that minute he was a perfect hunter. He never refused, could not make a mistake, and was of irreproachable manners.

Those who know the cutting at Deepcut bridge on the Basingstoke Canal, near Aldershot, will appreciate the strength of his back on learning that he carried me up the cutting and over a weak fence at the top.—It was at Manœuvres.—My Chief's horse, which I led up, very nearly fell back.

One more incident to his credit, among many. Arriving late at a distant meet after hounds had gone away, I started off to find them in a strange

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and difficult country near Mayhill, in Gloucestershire. Coming to a deep-banked and unjumpable brook, over which was a footbridge with a low stile at each end and light rail on one side, I observed that the narrow wooden footway was both solid and dry. So at a walk, with me on him, he popped over the first stile, walked sedately across, and popped over the other. Some boys raised a cheer which I trust the sagacious animal knew was for him. A book could be written about my horses and dogs, but it is time to return to my barracks.

Having condemned the first consignment of timber, it seemed well to visit the big London firm, whose head kept me a long time waiting, and who opened the conversation pleasantly by saying, "I had been warned never to have anything to do with Royal Engineers, and I have learnt from experience never to do so."

I suggested, "You are probably loading timber for Stoughton: shall we go and look at it?"—"That's fair," he said, so we went.—"I object to this, that, and the other for such reasons."—"You are quite right, you ought to have been a timber-merchant. Now our loss must be heavy, how can you meet us?" Our business relations afterwards proved excellent and we got splendid goods.

We carried out extensive experiments in concrete, and, in the soldiers' blocks, the stairs, landings, and solid balustrades were cast in a single mass—the same centreing serving for more than one block.

I had hoped to cultivate such pleasant relations with the workmen that there would be no strikes. Individually we got on capitally, but the Bricklayers' Union proved impossible.

There was a heavy frost, and neighbouring builders

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had all stopped work, while for a day or two I kept men on at little inside jobs that did not pay, but yet could be preserved from frost. As, however, the frost continued, notice was given that work must cease. "Then we'll strike," said the bricklayers. "All right; and none of you will be taken on again," was the reply, so they were paid off. Yet these were said to be the pick of the men all round. As intimidation was tried on the few non-union men, the police were called in. The strikers knew that every brick they put in must come out again; but the same bad spirit and want of interest in their craft was shown by the next lot, as soon as they learnt that there was no other job for me to take them on to.

The War Office had asked my opinion on certain tenders for another Brigade Depôt. I wrote that the lowest tender could only have been made to bolster up the firm's failing credit. Nevertheless, that tender was accepted, and in the middle of the work the contractor failed; and for a short time that barrack was added to my job.

On my return from South Africa I had built another *Zephyr* in the old nursery at home, and so had pleasant paddles and sails on the river Wey on summer evenings, much to the delight of my bull-terriers. At a dinner party one night a man said, "You'll be knocked on the head some day, crossing those fields, by discontented workmen."—"Not if he has got those bull-terriers with him," replied another.

They would walk one on each side of me, or one in front and one behind, and so would continue till otherwise directed.

The first night that I slept in my half-completed

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quarters a gale got up. Now no locks had yet been fixed, so the doors began banging loudly. The dogs were below in the kitchen and had never been upstairs where I was sleeping, yet they came rushing upstairs to see if I wanted help. "All right, good dogs!"—and down they rushed, into the open, where they began to bark furiously to drive away the supposed enemy. When told to fetch boots or slippers from the bedroom, they knew which was which.

About that time C.K. used to ride his high bicycle on a Saturday, from Gillingham Barracks, Chatham —60 miles—play lawn tennis all the afternoon, and on Monday morning ride back in time for 11 a.m. parade.

Owing to the trouble in getting a cab out from Guildford, I rode or walked to dinner parties. In the latter case when the ground in barracks was muddy, the stalwart watchman would carry me on his back to the road. I was often at Stoke Park and Worplesdon Court, and at the latter place met Mr. Cardwell, the Secretary of State for War. Our host remarked that his son and I were "rather hard on Mr. Cardwell," when the latter rejoined, "Oh, I like coming into the country and hearing what men have to say." I had urged among other points that more land should be bought round Brigade Depôts.

I met, when canoeing, that most interesting naturalist, Salvin, who was fishing with cormorants in the Wey.

Amongst other tamed beasts and birds he had a young Indian wild boar, in succession to an Indian sow, which used to follow him about like a dog. On being taken to see him in his pen, I suggested

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that its 6-foot paling was hardly high enough. There were two pens with door between. Shortly afterwards, in Salvin's absence, his men shifted the boar from one pen to the other, in order to clean the first. This excited the boar, and he was just coming over the top, when a push from the broom under his chin sent him back again. The men foolishly took no further notice and the next minute he was out!

Then instead of waiting for Salvin's return, they drove him about in the garden till he got on to the common, and the cry was raised, "Wild boar at large." All the countryside rose. The animal charged one of his assailants and knocked him down, but providentially, the tusk, that would have ripped him, had been broken off in coming over the stout paling. Then Salvin appeared when the pig was at bay, and was warned not to go near him. Replying, "Oh, the pig knows me," he advanced and was promptly knocked over, but again by the tuskless side. An excited servant rushed to an ex-Indian Judge at his dinner: "Wild boar at large: bring your gun, sir!" Eventually the poor beast was done to death by an assortment of weapons.

On one occasion C.K. and a bull-terrier came as passengers in my canoe 8 miles down the river and back up the canal. The dog was on the deck in front, C.K. in the well, and I on the deck hatch-cover aft, with feet in the well, my brother leaning against my knees—a very comfortable arrangement, and not a bad load for a craft weighing barely 65 lb.

At an afternoon party at Guildford the subject of Electrobiology was started, and I mentioned the curious results of spanning some one's waist and willing something to be done. Every one was

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sceptical, but K——, a medical man, offered himself for experiment, leaving the room, while we decided what he was to do, viz., to go to an oriel window at the far end of the room and open an album.

The young lady of the house and I spanned his neck, for he was of too stalwart a build for his waist to be spanned without touching it, which I always carefully avoided. I willed hard and at once he began to move in the right direction. Soon I became aware that we could not all three get round an ottoman, and instantly he lost direction and I threw up. Every one said, "Of course there is nothing in it." I said, "Ask him what he thought he had to do," and he replied, "To go to that window and open the album, was my first impression, but suddenly that idea left me."

At a party in London when this sort of thing was a novelty, a fine young woman, a thorough sceptic, went out, and on her return a young lady and I spanned her waist. As she did not move, I threw up, saying that she was a bad subject. An old gentleman, a stranger to me, excitedly said, "It's very wrong; you've no right to do this sort of thing." Yet in a few minutes he came back and said, "She says you have no influence on her and I don't suppose you have. I should like to see it proved."

So out she went again, and again I threw up almost directly, but this time she had to be supported away and given sal volatile. In her absence they asked me what I meant by "a bad subject." I replied that she might have broken away, and smashed anything she could in the room. On her return some one questioned her and she said, "I felt that I must break away and smash everything

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in the room." Of course she had been resisting. On the few occasions when by request I have done this, the results were remarkable. It may be added that I had been up to the Electrobiologists, Professor Home, Madam Chard, and another, and they had no effect on me.

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CHAPTER VI

HOME SERVICE IN LONDON—1876–80

In 1876 I was moved to London, where my most important work was the rebuilding of the Household Cavalry Barracks at Knightsbridge, but various other barracks and military buildings, in and out of London, were also in my charge.

Eighty great sheets of plans for Knightsbridge were given me, and I found important structural alterations to be necessary. Fortunately, one early improvement produced a saving of £1,200, so there was money to meet other improvements, without the delay and difficulty of obtaining fresh grants. One such case is of general interest. In the old barracks there had been two large tympanums, exactly the same. The Household Cavalry had asked that the Royal Arms from those tympanums should be replaced in the new building, which involved provision of two similar spaces. However, the architect found himself unable to introduce more than one tympanum, and that was situated on the Knightsbridge side of the officers' quarters. One morning my friend Watson (later Sir Charles) came into my office at the Horse Guards and said, "What do you know about Heraldry, Wood?" and the reply was, "Neither more nor less than the ordinary man in the street."—"Well, you have got your Lion on the wrong side of the Coat of Arms." I begged Watson not to say a word to

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anyone and sent out instructions to the contractor, the military foreman of works (my old Guildford treasure), and half a dozen men to meet me after works.

Sure enough the Supporters were on the wrong sides, and the scaffolding was struck. Now on the ground were stored the duplicate Arms, so we laid out the tympanum and tried to fit them in, but it could not be done.

I gave an order for new Supporters to be cut in stone, and enjoined absolute silence on every one as I intended to chance whether London would find out the mistake. In a little over three weeks, all was ready and the order given for scaffolding to be erected from the top windows and roof after dusk, the change to be made in the night, and the scaffolding struck by dawn. The proof of this, for future generations, lies in the fact that the old Arms are plaster-cast, while the Supporters are stone. Here my "nest-egg" came in most usefully, as on other occasions.

The morning came, and with it a message from the Inspector-General of Fortifications to see him. "What is this, Wood! His Royal Highness is much concerned to see this in the papers about Knightsbridge!"—"What is in the papers, sir?"—"What will the Royal Engineers be doing next? Anyone walking down Knightsbridge will see that they have got the Supporters of the Royal Arms wrong."—"Anyone walking down Knightsbridge, sir, will see the Lion on the proper right and the Unicorn on the proper left."

Sir Lintorn Simmons said the Duke would be delighted to hear the story, so off he went and they had a good laugh together over it.

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When the work was half through, the masons struck for higher pay, thinking the contractor must yield as he was bound by time. He explained to me that he was giving full London rates and that he would not yield if he were not penalized for delay in completion. Being reassured on this point, he refused to yield to the strike, and at once installed machinery to run off the copings, string-courses, etc. Thus the strike was beaten, and fewer masons were required afterwards.

As cab-hire would have been ruinous, I got ample exercise walking through the parks to the various works, including St. John's Wood Barracks, which was reached through the Zoological Gardens by merely presenting my card. This privilege had been generously given to the R.E. officers, as the Corps had once presented a camel to the Society. Later on this privilege was very reasonably held to have been in force long enough.

I had been nearly fourteen years a Subaltern, when in the autumn of 1877 I became a Captain. Being in command of the London R.E. Company, the Authorities of the South Kensington Museum gave as a quarter the old Manor House in the grounds.

It was due to the late Prince Consort that Sappers were housed in the Museum, as a fire picquet and working party of artisans, and also as a protection in case of trouble. Half the company was employed on the Survey of the Defences of London, so that the muster for weekly drill in the grounds was not a large one.

There was a lawn-tennis court attached to my quarters, and another in the Museum Quadrangle for the Museum Staff. I began here my long and close friendship with General Festing (retired R.E.),

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one of the Directors, and his family, which tended to make my surroundings very pleasant.

As there was ample room I invited Watson to live with me. The whole of this old-world bit of London has been swept away by the extension of the Museum.

One winter my eldest sister, Myra, visited me and occupied my bedroom as being more convenient than the spare room. Early in the morning after her arrival, when the ground was thick with snow, I heard General Festing's cheery voice. I stole on to the balcony and saw him throwing snowballs at my sister's bedroom window and gaily shouting, "Come out of that, I see you. Come along out." I soon took him in flank with some well-directed snowballs. He was mildly confused when introduced later to my sister, who had been a wee bit surprised at the style of the early morning salutation!

My canoe was generally kept at Hammersmith boathouse, but was sometimes slung from my hall-ceiling. About this time and for some years, when moving the *Zephyr* by train for one of her many trips, I used to obviate the possible difficulty of getting her into the luggage van, by climbing the roof of a low carriage near the rear, and with the aid of a friendly porter would lash her securely. By the time an inspector or guard saw her, the thing was done. I accepted all risks, and of course had already taken a canoe ticket.

Sir Lintorn Simmons (later Field-Marshal) lived at Cornwall Gardens, where I used to act in private theatricals for Lady Simmons, and also in the small theatre in Albert Hall. Miss Simmons was an accomplished actress, and as I always dined there for rehearsals, it was very enjoyable.

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Once when walking with a distinguished Guards officer, we passed Sir Lintorn, and my companion remarked, "That is the man I want to see Commander-in-Chief." He was constantly consulted, when Inspector-General of Fortifications, on important questions, by the Foreign and Colonial Secretaries of State. At the time of the Russo-Turkish War, when we were on the eve of war with Russia, he called early one day on the S.S. War and asked him if he had seen in the paper the departure of some big Russian ships for an unknown port, and if he knew what it meant.

Mr. Hardy was not aware of any special object. "Well, they will go to America, probably to Charlestown, and there take in armaments and complete for war. They will then steam for Simons Town. Have you anything to stop them there?"—"No," was the reply.—"Very well, they will fill up with coal and burn the rest; and you will get no news for weeks. Then they will do the same at Gaul and Singapore, but will probably avoid Hong-Kong. Have you anything to stop them?"—"No," was still the reply, "and now go from me to the Admiralty and repeat this conversation."

That was the origin of the special vote of the five millions to be spent in feverish haste before the end of the financial year, in defences at Singapore, etc., and in works at home.

When the trouble with Russia had blown over, it was found that Sir Lintorn had been correct as to their intentions in every particular. He would have been offered the command of the Expeditionary Force if he would have adopted the Government scheme of operations. However, he considered it would be disastrous and so submitted his own plan.

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Now Simmons had intimate knowledge of the near East, and had commanded a large Turkish force in Silistria during the Crimean War, yet his plan was not accepted. The provisional Command was given to Lord Napier of Magdala (also ex-R.E.), who called for the papers and, after studying them, decided to adopt Simmons' plan. Some time afterwards, when I was Sir Lintorn's A.D.C., he told me it had been the dream of his life to command a British Army in the Field, and it had cost him much to decline to adopt the Government plan. I had been appointed Adjutant R.E. in one of the Divisions of the Expeditionary Force, and as such went down for Aldershot Manœuvres, with Colonel E. Gordon as C.R.E. and Sir Frederick Stephenson as Divisional General, all from the London District. We came away feeling that the Aldershot School had hardly sufficiently realized the importance of entrenchments in modern warfare which was proved at Majuba. Had our men been lying in shallow trenches withdrawn from the abrupt hill crest, there would have been a very different story, as was clear to me after my personal visit to Majuba, as described later.

It was our privilege to see a good deal of General "Charlie" Gordon, who would come and spend the evening with us, for Watson had served under him when Gordon was Governor of the Soudan. Gordon gave each of us steel helmets and chain armour which he had taken in battle from slave-hunting Arabs—old Saracenic armour.

In August, 1879, I canoed from Hammersmith down the Thames to Shoeburyness, and thence to Whitstable, where we arrived late at night. In the dark we had run on an extensive mudbank just below low tide, and 2 miles from shore, so, as the

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sailing keel was on, there was little to do but await the rising tide. We returned by the Swale to Chatham, and finally back by Medway and Thames, having had ample opportunity for sketching the picturesque barges under sail and practising pleasant repartees with their skippers. The beginning of October in that year found me abroad on a short sketching trip, including a visit to Venice. Here on paying my bill and producing a £5 note, the hotel manager rubbed it in his hands saying, "That is the sort of paper we like to get," and gave as change 142 instead of 127 of their paper lire.

The following note appears in my sketch-book:

"Walked from Thusis to Splugen up the grand Via Mala and Soffia Gorge, and had an icy dip in Hinter Rhine. Then to Chiavenna (24 miles), having had a dip in the Leiro. Coming through a vineyard where they were gathering grapes, I said, 'Datemi grappine' and was duly presented with some: that, said I to myself, is the value of knowing the language; but on looking up grapes in my little pocket dictionary the word was found to be absolutely different.

"At Como I had a fine swim, towing the boat with the 'painter' in my mouth. The following is extracted from notes: 'Scrambled up Monte Generoso above mists—glorious views! Only visitor in huge hotel, closing that day for the winter. The porter kindly rang the big bell in the evening to guide me back through the mists. Walked from Baveno to Lake Orta, 9 miles, had a long, refreshing swim; then over hills, leaving tracks, to find one's way to the top of Monterone. Desperate awkward places, mists following me up. At head of the rocky gorge up which I had climbed, I stuck a stick with my collar attached as a mark in case of being befogged, and thence took a compass bearing to the top. A magnificent sunset above mists: Monte Rosa in the rosiest of glows, with a rolling sea of mist below. Bee-line in the dusk down to Baveno, jumping the fences near the bottom, in fifty-five minutes. Thighs stiff next day from mad descent: had to sacrifice the good collar. Guide with tourists and mule, who did not stay for the sunset, took 3½ hours to get back to the hotel.'"

At the beginning of 1880 Sir Lintorn appointed

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me his A.D.C. in succession to Watson, whereupon I bought a thoroughbred for a mere song at Tattersall's, as there was no reserve and no company present to bid. He proved a perfect Park hack, being able to walk or canter at 5 miles an hour.

One afternoon the C.R.E. London District, who was Brigadier of London Volunteer Engineers, told me that he was holding an inspection of them all in Regent's Park that evening and that the officer who was to act as his Galloper had just failed him. I volunteered to act, if he did not mind my riding an untrained horse with troops, which might prove a failure. I had the horse out, banged the sword scabbard against his flanks and otherwise tried him with successful results, so in due course he appeared on parade. An experienced officer said afterwards he wondered where I got so perfect a charger, which after his gallop with orders would return composedly behind the General, as if to the manner born. At last, as it was getting dusk, the troops marched past in line of quarter columns with massed bands. As the crowd had closed round us, my horse looked nervously right and left, and seeing no means of escape, threw himself right over on his back, but was up and away before he could be stopped. After jumping one lot of iron hurdles he fell at a second, and was then brought back. As he was in a very excited state, and 16 hands high, I knew there would be difficulty in mounting, so said to a horsey-looking man, "When I am alongside, catch me by the knee and pitch me into the saddle." This he cleverly did, sword and all, to the cheers of the crowd.

Talking of horses: My father, past 70, was still taking his own line with the Ledbury hounds. He

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and his four sons were well known on the hunting field. My two elder brothers were mentioned by the correspondent of *The County Gentleman*, who after hunting with the Ledbury and North Herefordshire hounds wrote: "But as to two brothers, doctors, I never saw a fence that could stop either of them." When my eldest brother was nearly 70, a stranger hunting with the N.H. told me, that on his asking for a good pilot, my brother was pointed out. He went on to say that seeing he was an elderly man he thought he would be fairly safe to follow, but as about the first fence he went over was a high iron railing, that was the end of the pilotage.

Probably the best of all my father's hunters was Bluerock, a thoroughbred, sold at Cheltenham at the end of the season, out of a well-known Hunt. The Whip, who alone rode him, said he was the best horse by far in the Hunt, and that it was a shame to sell him.

A good man with the Ledbury bought him, and when they asked how he proposed to get the horse home, he replied, "Why, ride him, of course."—"Well, look out for squalls!"—He was thrown twice on the way home, and as he found he could do nothing with the horse, my father took him off his hands and handed him over to Miles to see what he could do. When trotting along the road Bluerock's trick was suddenly to spin round and buck badly. However, my brother could sit him and also thrash him soundly, so after two or three encounters the horse absolutely gave up the trick and became perfectly mannered.

A certain Captain B. brought his fine stud from Leicestershire to hunt with the Ledbury, and at

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the Meet one Monday, on my admiring his mount, he said, "You check too often in this country to suit these horses."—"Well," was the reply, "was not last Friday good enough?"—"Yes, but that was quite exceptional." On that day, January 9, 1874, we had a 10-mile point, very fast, and ditches bank-full of water. He had been one of the half-dozen of us up at the kill, but had experienced three falls.

The *Gloucester Chronicle*, in reporting this run, wrote: "To witness this glorious run were representatives of no less than nine different packs of hounds": and then followed their names. Well, we were now to have an even more remarkable run. Finding in Worcestershire, we ran over the Malvern Hills into Herefordshire, very fast back into Worcestershire round the south end of the hills, and finally whipped off a long way from kennels in Gloucestershire, when the Master, Morrell, who was also Huntsman, and I, who had for the nonce to act as Whip, were the only two anywhere near hounds. Morrell was on a third horse, while Bluerock was going as strong as ever. Distance 23 miles by the Ordnance Map. People viewed two foxes running together for the first 8 miles and they skirted every covert. As it happened, the Leicestershire man was out of it, with most others, long before the finish.

When Lord Coventry was Master of the Queen's Buckhounds, I happened to be riding back with him after a long run, and he remarked that if he had to select the most sporting country he knew, he would be disposed to select the Ledbury side of the Severn valley.

In June, 1880, Sir Lintorn and Major Ardagh, R.E.

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(later Sir John), were appointed British Delegates to the Berlin Conference. Just as we were starting with Lady and Miss Simmons viâ Flushing, Lord Granville directed Sir Lintorn to go to Paris, so I had the duty of escorting the ladies. A difficulty had arisen with the French Government which Sir Lintorn had to try to settle. He quickly succeeded and we all duly met at the Kaiserhof, where we occupied the suite of rooms used by Lord Beaconsfield at the previous Congress.

The Military Delegates from the various European nations, except the Turks, met to discuss and decide on the Turkish boundaries in the Balkans, and the Ambassadors acted in the place of special Plenipotentiaries.

At the start there was much calling and leaving of cards. It was pleasant to see how warmly Ardagh was welcomed by those who had previously met him in the near East. Even I, a mere "Adjoint" who did not attend the meetings, received cards from Prince Bismarck and other Highnesses. However, I was usefully employed, for Sir Lintorn had brought out scores of maps of the countries involved, and I had to colour them to show the British proposals. He, therefore, had a strong position, for he gave a map to every member, with the English and French proposed boundary marked on it. This was discussed, and of course objections were raised, so a fresh set of maps had to be coloured, embodying modifications, and so it went on. A year or two later, when I saw the river Kalamas flowing a dirty yellow, I was reminded of the times that I had coloured it blue on those maps.

We dined at the Palace, where the old Emperor spoke to each one of us, and we attended an import-

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ant function at the Embassy. We also lunched at Potsdam with the grand-looking Crown Prince and our own "Princess Royal." After lunch the Crown Prince Frederick, instead of discussing Military matters with Sir Lintorn, discussed lawn-tennis with me, and I told him all about making gravel and grass courts. The present ex-Kaiser was also there.

On leaving, the Royal carriage, in which Ardagh and myself were driving, was a long way behind the one containing the others. The populace kept on taking off their hats to us, which Ardagh, being short-sighted, did not notice. I, however, was graciously bowing in response, so at last he said, "What on earth are you doing, bowing like that?" —"These good people take us for Royalties and we ought not to disappoint them," was the reply.

We attended the important Military steeplechases at which all rode in uniform, but the fences were so insignificant that I hopped up to and over three of them to satisfy myself on the point before reflecting that this procedure might be offensive to onlookers. The Embassy lent us their boat on one of the Potsdam lakes, and seeing that the varnish was terribly scratched we learnt that this was caused by the spurs of Prussian officers to whom the boat had been lent and who boated in spurs!

At the conclusion of the Conference, which took about a month, there was a dinner of all the Military Delegates at the Kaiserhof. When dinner was ended, the German, who was President, propounded the question: which Nation, as represented at table, had the greatest domestic importance. He was winning with eight children, when Sir Lintorn, who was sitting next to him, said, "Wait a minute, there is my A.D.C. at the bottom of the table who

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has a grandmother who is 101 years old."—"Mon Dieu! est-ce possible?" Being assured that it was not only possible but a fact, they all stood up and cried "England wins," and they toasted the old lady, who thus won this important event for England.

The Marquis de Ferronays and the Baron de Ripp, on either side of me, drank "Madame la Grand'-mère particulièrement" and begged that I would let her know.

Ardagh had to leave with Despatches for London, while the rest of us went a delightful trip to Dresden and the Saxon Switzerland, and then down the Rhine on the way home.

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CHAPTER VII

MALTA—1880–2

In the autumn of 1880 I went to Malta in command of the 17th (Fortress) Company R.E., and a Submarine Miners' Co. R.E. was also on board, whose Captain in stature and appearance much resembled me. On arrival at Malta, finding that the other company had disembarked while mine had received no orders, I went to the Disembarking Officer for orders and was met with, "If I have told you once, I have told you half-a-dozen times that you can go when you like."—"I have never before spoken to you, sir."—He looked at me fixedly and said, "No more you have."

In those days officers wore whiskers, so I immediately shaved mine off, but of course when A. saw how greatly the appearance was improved, he proceeded to do likewise—worse luck!

The R.E. Subalterns combined to hire a nice house in Floriana with a quaint bit of garden, while I took a house looking on to the harbour. The high windowless end of my house abutted on to the Subalterns' garden. In order to avoid the trouble of going from their door to mine, which was some distance and involved going up and down many steps, I fixed a rope to my roof and on occasion would swarm up and down it, though getting over the heavy overhanging cornice was somewhat diffi-

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cult. Later, Graham Thomson, one of my subalterns, came to live with me.

I had a Maltese servant, José, and the house being large I suggested he should bring his wife to live in it, instead of going home every night, but he replied, "Oh, Signor, you not like my wife: Maltese man very good, but Maltese woman no good—you not like my wife." Certainly Maltese menservants and grooms were excellent and faithful, while I fully agreed with José on seeing his wife. The men, called fatigue-men, prove excellent housemaids.

The R.A. and R.E. Officers' Mess was in a beautiful Castille in Valetta, where we met very happily in brotherly accord.

My work was chiefly concerned with fortifications, new and old, including a battery for a 100-ton gun on each of the outer flanks of the Grand and Quarantine harbours. They were terribly heavy things to get up the slopes into position.

The Grand harbour had to be crossed to reach my office, and the boatmen found my handsome pointer, Ponto, a never-failing source of amusement. He would stand like a fine figure-head at the bow till near the far side, when he would turn round, dive below in a prodigious hurry under the thwarts and men's legs, reappearing by me at the stern, and then tear back over the men's arms and oars to the bow and plunge overboard, which manœuvre he performed regularly. He was the quaintest of dogs, and any of my friends who took him out had always some humorous story to tell of him. He was also excellent for quail shooting.

My canoe proved a constant source of amusement and healthy recreation, and I especially loved a paddle out to sea on rough days. Once, when coming

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back, the following seas off St. Elmo were so big and threatening that I spun the *Zephyr* round between two waves so as to face them and paddle backwards. This procedure would have been absolutely impossible with a Rob Roy, for we should not have been half round before being rolled over. No yachts were outside, but a big passenger steamer gave us a cheer.

On another occasion near this point, when sailing close-hauled, a flaw of wind struck us from behind. Expecting we should be up in the wind every second, I foolishly did not let go the sheet, so we were finally blown clean over.

I had proposed canoeing to Sicily, some 60 miles, as the polestar would give the required direction at night, and had arranged a floating anchor in case of need. Cameron, a Subaltern, R.E. (later Sir Maurice), begged me to wait for him. He was a Master Mariner. He set to work to build a canoe just like the *Zephyr*, only a trifle larger, as he was a big fellow, but unfortunately he was moved to Singapore before he was quite ready. There the canoe did great things and eventually came to a fine end in a monsoon.

Among sailing races there was one for cruising canoes, the course being 3 miles at sea under sail, returning under paddle some 3 miles to Quarantine harbour, then to jump overboard and on board again before finishing. The day proved very rough, and so only one canoe, a 16-footer, competed with *Zephyr*, and the latter won very easily.

There was a splendid officers' bathing place between Tigne and Sliema, with freshwater shower-bath. As I had proposed starting water-polo, I found myself promptly made Chairman of Committee.

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Each member was asked to submit a design for ponies, but as none were forthcoming mine was adopted. It was a hollow-bodied hobby-horse with centre of back cut down for saddle and to get the centre of gravity fairly low. The first two had weighted keels so as to be steady for beginners to learn on, and were known as the "Family" horses, while six others were lighter and had no keels. The materials were wood and stout painted canvas—short double-bladed paddles, and ball of shredded cork in canvas, completed the equipment.

It was exciting work and very strenuous. It was laughable to see men, in their efforts to remount, tumbling over the other side, and sometimes reduced to the assistance of swimmers in getting on again. This assistance of course was not possible in a match.

The R.E. team consisted of myself and my two Subalterns, both very enduring and sturdy fighters: Heath (now Maj.-General Heath-Caldwell) and Graham Thomson (now Brig.-General). From much canoeing I was able to kneel on top of my pony, and as there was no drag of the legs in the water, a much greater pace was possible in order to carry on the ball. Indeed, we never lost a match, even against the whole island.

We gave an exhibition off Sliema, riding our Naval ponies there, a distance of a mile. We were in fancy dress, and an Admiral wrote to me that he had never laughed so much in his life. The umpires sat solemnly on the "Family" horses under white cotton umbrellas, while the most exciting mêlées went on:—the ponies' proud-looking heads and tails bobbing about, paddles and spray flashing in the brilliant sunlight, and comic incidents in abundance!

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Alas! the '82 war saw the end of that really sporting game, in which such skill had been attained that we could catch the ball in mid-air on the paddle and throw it forward. No handling of any kind was permitted.

In the winter the R.E. Officers challenged the whole Garrison at Association football, but to complete the team they had to rope me in, though I was of very little count at the game. We had, however, three or four of our old champion team of England, besides other useful players. They told me off as goalkeeper, and as we had to practise shooting at goal, which was carried out in a great rock-cut ditch in the fortifications, I had a rougher, livelier time than was altogether agreeable and acquired a fair crop of bruises. In the match, however, our backs, Cowan and Heath, were undefeatable and the goalkeeper had nothing to do; so we won very easily, owing to combination as much, possibly, as to individual skill.

Ample subjects for sketching existed, and from my drawing-room the masted men-of-war, now only historical, could be painted at leisure.

As Malta had a bad name for intemperance I started teetotalism for example's sake, as I had once before tried in London. The result *then* had been an attack of carbuncular boils of so virulent a type that Watson declared that never, even in the Soudan, had he seen "Egyptian" boils so bad. Port wine and stout were medically prescribed with immediate good results.

Well, I found one of these troubles coming on, and went about my work with great and increasing difficulty, till one morning, seeing it was far worse, I sent for the leading Civil practitioner, who said,

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" My good sir, surely you have not been going about like this: it is pure carbuncle: I must operate at once." As soon as he had left the room, José exclaimed, " Oh, it not right! it not right: I think he go to touch you; but he go So! So!—fit to kill a calf!" How good José did make me laugh! That carbuncle was the worst of them, but the trouble persisted in a milder form for three months, though I did not go on the sick-list.

At last I was invited to voyage to Corfu on H.M.S. *Hecla* and join their shooting party. Soon after getting on board, the Naval surgeon noticed my lameness and proffered his assistance; and I heard him say to the assisting steward, " This is extraordinary—extraordinary!" Having strapped me up he said, " You've a deep-seated cavity in your thigh as big as a saucer, and how you are going to walk and shoot in two days, I don't know." However, I walked with the best of them, and have never since been similarly troubled; though to help some one I have once or twice given up " drink " for a month, but never longer.

We hired a yacht at Corfu and went shooting on the Albanian coast, but had poor sport as the season was exceptionally bad. We found the Greeks drilling hard in expectation of war with Turkey.

H.M.S. *Hecla* was a Depôt ship, for carrying torpedo boats, and was instructed to carry out a series of experiments, to see how much she would roll, and so was always put to seas and swells in the direction which would make her roll most. Once, when every one was on parade and no one watching the pendulum, I saw an unusually big roller approaching on our beam, so ran to the pendulum and noted that it was unable to register

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the full angle of roll, yet the ship seemed absolutely safe and came back without any unpleasant hesitation. H.M.S. *Iris* took me back to Malta.

In January, 1882, Lieutenant Layard, R.E., accompanied me on a short trip in Sicily and Italy; and as usual the ways of the Customs on landing were vexatious. They claimed on a 1 lb. tin of biscuits much more than its cost, so I offered it to the officials; and on their refusal distributed the contents among the porters, much to their satisfaction. On entering Italy in 1879, carrying only a handbag and affirming nothing to declare, they yet tossed everything out, and finding the tin, containing the sponge, very hard to open, asked what was in it. Now they had refused to accept my statements, so I merely shrugged my shoulders and said, nothing to declare, enjoying the situation. When the sponge at last came forth, the onlookers roared with laughter.

From Naples we went in the "Opposition" steamer to Capri. A note in my sketch-book says: "Unique case of wholesome opposition: the return fare to Capri used to be 12 francs (*vide* Baedeker), there being no opposition as there was only one steamer. A second was put on by a rival Company at 9 francs. The other at once went down to 6—the rival to 3—the original Company to free passage—the rival to free passage and glass of cognac. Crowds assembled at the start: the police had to interfere to keep the peace; so the Authorities interposed and fixed the fare at 3 francs—cheap!"

From Pompeii we saw a stream of glowing lava pouring out of the side of Vesuvius, which was active, so I decided to visit the hole. Defeating the guides who rushed to capture me by a torrent

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of "Potsdamer Dampschiff's" and certain other quaint German objurgations, up I walked round the steaming sides of the mountain and found the large hole, in which the lava was now boiling, about a foot below the surface.

Then on reaching the summit and crossing the old crater, I joined a tourist and guide, who were watching the eruption. This solitary tourist, an American, had his nose and mouth wrapped up in a cloth as a protection against the strong sulphurous fumes. The wind of course blew from us towards the new active vent close below us. Rumble—rumble—rumble—then a great explosion sending scoriæ and stones perhaps a thousand feet up!—then subsidence of this stuff and of the steam, so that we could look down into what might be called the mouth of hell, glowing red. This was repeated at close intervals, but as the wind began to change and the light scoriæ to fall around us, we beat a hasty retreat. My time, by the watch, for descending the 1,500-foot vertical height of the cone (formed of deep soft ashes) was 3½ minutes. As we returned to Malta we found Etna active while Vesuvius had resumed quietude.

On June 29, 1882, many of us officers went home for the leave season, including the Governor's Military Secretary. We touched at the North African ports of Goletta and Sousa, where I visited the French troops encamped in their *tentes d'abri*, and had chats with them about La belle France. We also spent a day at Tunis.

Arrived in England, we found war in the air and, on reporting at the War Office, my D.A.G. said, "Why, Wood, we counted on your being with your company."—"I am ready to return this moment,

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sir, but the Governor had not received the least note of warning."

And this, be it noted, when the Authorities were counting on Malta for the first troops to be despatched to Alexandria! The D.A.G. went at once to the Duke of Cambridge, who said I might go home, but must be prepared to receive orders by wire.

Five minutes after reaching home in Herefordshire, a wire from Malta ordered immediate return, but it was then too late in the evening to catch any train. Next morning Miles drove me over the Malvern Hills to catch the 6 a.m. train, a handbag containing indispensable articles being my only luggage, so as to avoid being hampered *en route*. Arrived in London, my first visit was to Cook and Son for tickets by the quickest possible route, and while they were being prepared I visited the War Office.

Arrived at Calais, I found at the railway buffet some officers who were hurrying back to Malta. Some Frenchman called out that the train would not start punctually. However, I said to the fellows next me that it was not good enough to trust to that, and got to my carriage just in time. We pulled two fellows in through the window as we were moving, but some were left behind.

My impression was that the intention was to delay this little crowd of English officers, as our action in Egypt was unpleasing to France.

In Italy, two Subalterns of the 60th Rifles joined me, and asked me what was my route. On hearing that I was going by Reggio and Syracuse, whereby one-and-a-half days would be saved, as against the route they and the rest were taking, they at once said they would take my line. But the reply was,

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that there was only ten minutes at Naples, to change from one platform to the other, and with all their luggage and the Customs inspection it could not be done—unless—Yes, "unless one of you goes for the tickets, and the other with the luggage, and tip the Customs official handsomely." In due course Riley and I were in our carriage with the luggage. "Partenza" had been called, and the train would have been started, without Pigott, had we not both got out and stood on the platform.

Then Pigott appeared, storming down the platform, surrounded by officials who providentially understood very little of his English. On hurrying towards him, he exclaimed, "These swine, these swine, they won't take my bank notes!" Knowing this difficulty at railway stations, I had enough gold to reach Malta, my tickets being only for Reggio. Now it was of importance that the officer commanding the only R.E. Company immediately available, should get through early, so it was with a wrench that all my gold was handed over for the necessary tickets for Reggio.

Pigott was a most determined combative fellow, who proved himself a gallant soldier, but he only just missed languishing in an Italian prison, for he said he "was on the point of going a perisher among the lot of them," when I came up.

In those days the direct line to Reggio did not exist, and it was a very long journey, broken in the middle by a table d'hôte dinner at the railway restaurant. With a view to less trouble in getting a £5 note cashed, I wired on for a special dinner for three; and when at first the note was refused, I said how much we had enjoyed an excellent dinner, and was very sorry we had no other money. Thus

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we got enough of their paper money to take us to Syracuse, where one would have thought that our troubles would be over. Not a bit of it—neither note nor cheque was accepted at the shipping office, but a pass was issued for "Captain Wood and Family" on my promising to pay their agent at Malta before leaving the steamer! So at Malta, while my family went ashore, I had to wait till the agent came on board while the transport *Orontes* was flying the Blue Peter and every moment was precious!

In the two hours between landing and again leaving in *Orontes* I had reported for necessary orders and learnt that my company had left in temporary command of Captain Hyslop. I obtained a "fighting" jacket from the useful Diacono, got rid of my house, and regretfully parted with the faithful José, who had provided me with a successor —"better nor me, Signor."

My horse, however, though brought to the quay, could not be embarked, as the ship was on the far side of the Grand harbour, and there was no barge or horse boat.

Orontes had no troops on board, and only six officers, who were rejoining their Units.

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CHAPTER VIII

EGYPTIAN EXPEDITION—1882

On my arrival at Cyprus, the Governor, General Sir Robert Biddulph, an old friend of my family, decided, against my own view, that the best chance of catching up my company would be to tranship into a man-of-war expected next day; so I went with two of his staff for a long ride in the country. When leading our ponies down a rocky path, one of them let fly and kicked me on the elbow, rendering the left arm quite helpless—I made them promise not to mention it, and declined to see a doctor for fear of being detained as temporarily unfit for active service. The arm, though *hors de combat* for a considerable time, proved not to be broken, as had been feared. I landed at Alexandria one day after my company, while *Orontes* had arrived just before it. The work immediately in hand was to improve the defences and to repair the great breach in the old fortifications, under the direction of Major Ardagh, C.R.E. It was not long before the 17th Company was moved to the pleasant suburb of Ramleh.

When the company left Malta there was no R.E. Park, so all the tools and stores, that by regulation are dealt with by that Unit, were put on my ledger (which was sent after me), the amount being no less than ten times that allotted to a Fortress Company.

Again, the company having no Establishment of

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Transport, this was hurriedly improvised with pack-mules and single-mule carts, many of the mules being untrained. Had I attempted to carry on with all this impedimenta we should have been unable to move. The Ordnance Store however refused to take anything on their charge, stating that they had already more than they could manage. Thereupon I retained about three times the ordinary equipment and left the rest on the quay, facing with a light heart an ultimate deficit of 1,000 picks, 1,000 shovels, 50,000 sandbags and many other stores at the stock-taking at the end of the war. It was then stated that a corresponding unexplained surplus would probably be found in the Ordnance Store. This was found to be the case, though no voucher to clear me had been given.

At Ramleh my cousin, Colonel William Thackwell, commanding the South Staffordshire Regiment, was acting Brigadier. He had taken up and maintained a bold line with his small force, which also included a battalion of the 60th Rifles, some R.A., a company of Mounted Infantry, and a small Naval Detachment.

Ramleh had been deserted by the inhabitants. The charming villas with their contents had been left open, so that at night Bedouins used to come in and loot. One of my duties was to go round with a Provost-sergeant and seal up cellars, lock up houses, and make everything as secure as was possible. In one house the Sergeant brought me a new pair of brown leather field boots, saying they looked just my size. On my replying that I could not possibly appropriate them, he remarked that mine would not last a campaign and that boots were necessary war equipment. I recognized that he was full of

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common sense, for, indeed, my boots had seen their best days and in the hurry of the start a second pair had not been secured. The boots fitted exactly, and a note was left saying that payment would be made on application.

One capital house which had been locked up and left in charge of a trusty old seneschal, I reserved for the Duke of Connaught, to be ready for his arrival.

My company was housed in the barracks with the South Staffordshires and we messed with them.

On July 22 Heath removed part of the railway beyond Mallaha Junction, and the covering party exchanged shots with the enemy. We were generally busy at defences and well-sinking, for the enemy had put the whole of the water service out of order. One of our highly skilled Corporals however soon put it to rights.

One day I crossed the broad Mahmoudieh Canal at the railway bridge, and walking up under cover of the bank on the enemy's side, proceeded, with due circumspection, to inspect a large deserted farm, which it was thought we might occupy with advantage. The reconnaissance being ended, I decided to cross the canal at that point. I stripped, put everything, including sword (for in those days we wore swords on service), into a great earthenware bowl, and was just starting off when a poor little kitten came trotting after me, begging not to be deserted again. Having deposited my little friend on the top of my belongings I proceeded to swim across, pushing the valuable consignment. Kitty, however, crawled along my arm on to my shoulders and then, with its little paws on top of my head, purred away very contentedly, and soon was presented to our most advanced picquet.

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We had no bridging equipment, so two boat pontoons of wood and canvas were made, which proved most useful. A bridge for Infantry, in single file, was also constructed across the canal, whose mud was so deep, that a rod was pushed down into it, no less than 6 feet. Materials being very scarce, I used big kitchen tables for the bank ends, the legs being driven down over heavy palm logs. Old boarded roofing was cut into 6-foot squares and on them were fixed stout trestles, so that on these wide bases they only sunk a little in the mud. Length of bridge, 120 feet. General Dormer led his horse over this narrow primitive bridge to report to Sir Archibald Alison on the occasion of the August reconnaissance in force, when Thackwell's Brigade was separated from the main body by this formidable obstacle. That day I happened to be with the advance party of the South Staffords, working up the canal bank, where some wide deep-water ditches required considerable activity to negotiate. The officer was a heavy fellow and could not go the pace, and as I was almost one of themselves and therefore my action was not likely to give offence, I tied up my warhorse and went on with the men. We occupied a house from which the enemy retreated and we hastened their further retreat by a few volleys and then withdrew, as the object of our Brigade had been accomplished.

On the far side of the canal hostile reinforcements were seen, coming from Kaffir Douar, by train, so the two light Naval guns were ordered to come into action on our bank of the canal, to give support to the retirement of Sir Archibald's force. Fire was about to be opened, when we, who had field glasses, called out that the guns were laid on our Marines.

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A jolly tar exclaimed, "If us can't get a shot at H'arabi, let's get a shot at them blooming Marines,"—all in irresponsible good humour, *bien entendu*!

Among our casualties was the gallant commander of the Mounted Infantry, who could ill be spared.

I had bought another good Arab, and when, later on, I recognized my handsome Malta Barb, in a certain Unit, and asked to exchange, the officer in command demurred as he was distinctly the best horse in the Unit. However, when he knew that the Government, on commandeering my Barb, had given me considerably less than the Arab cost me, the exchange was made, much to my satisfaction.

On August 7 the 21st Co. R.E. had landed at Alexandria, so my half-company, which had been left there to carry on works under Captain Hyslop, joined me with transport, which brought up my total to twenty-four light carts and six pack mules.

On August 17 the order was given to embark at Alexandria and we had to pack up and start at night. The loads were very heavy, and as the native drivers had deserted, for the third time, special difficulties occurred, for we had only one trained driver, R.E. One small Cyprus mule sat down on the way, under a load of over 400 lb. which had been ignorantly put on him.

We embarked on transport *Nerissa* with Royal Marine Artillery, some stores were on transport *Rhosina*, which carried Royal Marine Light Infantry, while our leader for Port Said was H.M.S. *Euphrates*. Men-of-war and other transports stood in-shore to make a feint in Aboukir Bay.

Ere long *Nerissa* broke down and we were taken in tow by *Euphrates*, but after she had parted twice, she gave us up in disgust, so we were left derelict.

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A signal had, however, been made to the in-shore Naval Squadron, out of sight of us. Soon a cloud of smoke appeared on the horizon and H.M.S. *Alexandria* came up at full speed. She got a hawser round our mast, as our bollards had been carried away, took us gaily along at 11 knots, caught up and passed our friends, and put us an easy first into the Suez Canal, by which time our engines had been cured. How we blessed *Alexandria*—my sketch of her is now hanging on the wall before me.

Then, to our undoing, we were obliged to take on a French pilot, though our Captain said he could manage perfectly without one. This pilot kept taking the ground and caused grievous delays. Steam launches came from Ismailia urging us to hasten, and we could hear the Naval guns hard at work.

We were warned to expect an attack at Kantara cutting, so got up sacks of potatoes for poor make-shift parapets on deck, but nothing happened.

Finally our pilot succeeded in driving us, hard and fast, on a bank in Lake Timsah. It was quite dark, and 3 miles from the landing quay! The R.E. landed at once in fighting order and marched outside the suburbs, in support of the Naval Brigade. As matters quieted down and no orders reached us, we retired and bivouacked in the road, alongside M. Lesseps' abode, where we remained, thus securing his gardens from any intrusion. He gave, however, no sign of appreciation of this fact.

Next day I walked to Nefische Junction to inspect the railway and note necessary repairs. Knowing the trying conditions of intense heat and deep sand, I specially selected two of my most wiry men to come with me. The heat reflected up from the

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burning sand was like a fiery furnace. Colonel Tuson, commanding the R.M. battalion, greeted me at Nefische, and pointed to all his officers and men lying fast asleep in the great shed, absolutely played out, as he said, by that dreadful march through the burning sand. Then we three turned back by the canal bank. I more than once dipped my handkerchief and applied it to the back of my neck, but the other two walked stolidly on. Of course to march with a large body of men is vastly more trying.

On our return, Sappers were sent to repair the railway, and we also started an R.E. Park to store the quantities of stores which we had loaded up at Alexandria in addition to our equipment from Ramleh. Pumps and watering troughs were erected as usual at various places, and the water from the Freshwater Canal was husbanded by stopping the leaks in the lock and raising the overflow of the gates by boarding, which had to be done afresh whenever the gates had to be opened. The storage of water in the lowest reach was also increased, so that full supply could be pumped to Port Said, without opening the sluices in the upper lock, as was previously the case.

All my efforts to get my transport and stores landed failed, owing to the transport being seized by others on the spot. I therefore rode out and tied my horse up opposite *Nerissa*. I then stripped and with my shirt in a bundle on my head, I swam out, donning the shirt on the ladder—and so went on deck, meaning business. A Transport Officer soon recognized that, from the Army point of view, R.E. requirements were of primary importance, and a lighter that was about to be loaded with other

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stores was placed at my disposal. Half of our mules had been put on board when one dropped out of the slings and swam, good beast, straight for the shore. I then ordered the Sappers to push the rest off the lighter, into the sea, and the others to be dropped, from the ship, into the water, as fast as possible. The thirty excellent animals swam, in a continuous line, to shore, whither a boat had been sent to round them safely up. This left the lighter free for carts and stores. I stayed on board in my scanty attire till the clearance of all indispensable equipment and stores was assured.

As we were not a Field Company, and these had come out with the Force from home, we found ourselves left, much to our sorrow, at the Base. I was anxious to get my very capable Subalterns to the Front, so Heath, with a detachment and the two pontoons, accompanied the advance of General Graham's Force, and Thomson went as Galloper to Colonel Drake, the C.R.E. The carts, carrying the pontoons, drew a heavy fire, shells falling all round them, but, being as usual badly fused, they did no damage.

On August 25 Heath's party commenced destroying the dam at El Magfar, while the pontoons were rafted. It was by means of the pontoon that the Cavalry was rationed, as the land transport was quite unable to meet the situation, owing to the deep sand, the railway having been cut and the rolling stock removed.

On the 26th came a demand for more Sappers, so I started in the dark with all available men (thirty) in a barge, towed by a steam launch. While the men slept I had to steer that barge, the slightest yaw causing the cox of the launch to look back at

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me, no doubt reproachfully. Having been single-handed I had enjoyed little or no sleep of late, and if my eyes shut once they shut scores of times in those two hours. On reaching El Magfar I said to Heath, who looked tired out, that we should both knock up if we got no sleep that night. Just then the officer commanding the Naval Detachment on the other side of the canal—Moore, a stranger to me—very kindly sent me over a bottle of champagne. As we drank it, I said, "Now, Freddy, we shan't want sleep for a week!" We got none that night, nor did we seem to want it after that most exceptional pick-me-up, for which we wished Moore all prosperity, a wish which was certainly fulfilled.

About midnight Sir Garnet Wolseley came to the dam and asked when it would be possible to pass a steam launch through. The reply was at 4.30 a.m. He said it could not be done, whereupon I said that it should be. At 4.30 he came down again, by which time a trench had been cut through, but not quite deep enough for free flotation. A hawser from each bank had been attached to the bow of the boat and manned by the sailors and Sappers on either bank. I gave the word to the engineer, "Full speed ahead," and to the men, "Go—for all you are worth!" Such was their energy that the launch went safely through.

As land transport difficulties proved most serious, water transport was indispensable, until the railway was in good working order. This dam was a model of efficiency from the enemy's point of view. It was formed of successive crossed layers of long reeds, and sand, tied and matted together, solidly compressed by superincumbent weight. Telegraph posts tied together with wire were bedded in it

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and piles driven through it, so that picks, shovels, and specially constructed tools, could make only an absurdly small impression on it. Gun-cotton charges of 3 to 10 lb. had to be used, but big charges forced up the bed of the canal at the sides of the dam. Two dredges had been put out of action by the enemy. One of my Corporals, by taking parts from one dredger, repaired the other, which was lying in the reach above El Magfar. I was therefore able to attack the next dam, which was of sand only, though 50 feet thick and raised to a height of 12 feet above water. The canal was about 70 feet wide.

On August 29 I returned to Ismailia to bring out the transport, and tried the canal bank so as to avoid the deep sand. We started at night, along the raised narrow bank, and got on fairly well for 3 or 4 miles, until one cart and mule rolled over and over down the bank into the canal, and another soon followed suit. The Sappers plunged boldly in and retrieved the mules and carts, but it was time to leave that narrow, precarious foothold and face the sand and broken ground. With so few men it was most difficult to help the carts along, so after 7 miles we bivouacked, on reaching a watercourse, which we had to bridge next morning.

After leaving the canal, we had found the Indian Transport, strung out for miles, much bothered by the way and desperately open to any attack by an enterprising enemy!

On arriving at El Magfar it was reported that the all-important dynamo machine was missing from the load of one cart, that fell into the water, so I rode back, stripped and went in. The water was too thick to see in, so the plan was to try the bottom carefully with the feet. I had got into deep water,

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and with arms above head was going below again, when a highly-placed Staff Officer on the bank shouted at me. I said, "Good morning, sir," and went below. On reappearing, the command was given to come out at once, as bathing was forbidden in this water supply. The situation tickled me and I merely said, "I'm on duty," and went below, but next time I gave a full explanation. Anyhow, the dynamo was not there, for it had been removed from the cart by an officious storeman, who thought the load was too heavy as the cart left the yard, and so took the instrument off without saying a word!

It was found that the General Service wagons with Field Companies were far too heavy for such sand, so my unattached company with its very light high-wheeled transport was ordered to the Advance Force. We started on the evening of the 31st, Lieutenant Thomson having rejoined. We passed the Head-quarter Staff, who commented most favourably on our workmanlike appearance, and having marched 9 miles, bivouacked in the desert. I then reported to the Cavalry Brigade encamped 2 miles farther. General Drury-Lowe advised me to come into his camp for security, but I was able to say that we had securely laagered ourselves with carts, etc., and that we ought to be able to take care of ourselves against any raid on our communications.

On arrival at Kassassin next morning, defensive works were at once commenced to cover the important lock. The constant falling of the water necessitated sending both Subalterns, each with twenty men, to deepen the channels through the two dams.

On rejoining, Heath had a remarkable story to tell! One of his boots was quite worn out, when, riding across the desert, he found another solitary

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field boot, sound, of the same make and shade of colour as his own remaining sound boot. Indeed it was such a perfect match for it, that he had to show the different makers' names before the story could be fully believed. Providence had indeed been kind to him, for where else could he have looked for a boot and a fit!

On the enemy's attack on the 9th one or two of my mules were killed in camp; and at 2 a.m. on September 13 we started along the canal, conforming to the movement of the Army attacking Tel-el-Kebir Lines.

In addition to the usual transport we had three rafts, drawn by mules on each bank, in order to keep them more easily in the middle, and also to carry on when obstacles on either bank stopped traction on that side. We came under innocuous shell fire and duly reached the dam in the Lines, which was 50 feet wide at water level. A narrow channel had, however, been recently cut in it, for a "holy" man had told Arabi that no success could attend his arms unless the Nile water were allowed to flow.

It was reported that the enemy had cut the canal behind us so as to drain the water into the land of Goschen, so I rode my Barb at the cut to jump it and find out. The sides, however, proved to be practically quicksand, so in he went, badly bogged, with head only above water. This I kept up by the bridle, with very little to spare, while Sappers quickly attached a rope to his neck. Now, as a boy, I had seen a cart-horse, bogged in a pond, drawn out by a team with a chain round his neck. The Sappers lay back on the rope and prepared to haul, while the onlookers said, "You'll break his neck."

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But my stallion's neck was a strong one, so I replied, "No, we shan't; but in any case he has to come out"—and so he did; but very limp, poor fellow!

We were then soon rafted across, and having ridden back some miles, I was able to report to the C. in C. that the report was false.

Amongst other duties I buried a good many dead in one large grave in the ditch of the Lines, read a short service, and had a wooden cross erected.

We three officers had been living frugally on our rations like the men, but had kept one pot of marmalade, wherewith to commemorate a victory, so we opened it at dinner. It was no good to us, however, for the flies beat us. We would hold it close to the lips and blow vigorously, but a fly would always slip in at the last instant, so we very soon gave it up as hopeless!

Next day, having pointed out that we were sure to be wanted ahead, I obtained permission to visit the railway station to see if the men could be taken with a few tools, and no transport, so as to be able to repair any break in the line.

There proved to be just room for my reduced Unit on a train, but the Staff Officer said, "It is impossible for you to be in time." He did not, however, know my men and our keenness to get to Cairo.

Racing back the 2 miles to camp, I got the men on board just in time, and in due course we were dropped at Benha and bivouacked on the banks of the Nile. That night we heard that a hostile force of 2,000 men was marching on the bridge, so the garrison, consisting of ourselves and the 26th Field Company R.E., under Major Bindon Blood (later General Sir Bindon), drew up in defence. The

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enemy however had dispersed, for in fact the campaign was over.

We stayed there two nights, and it was good news to hear of my friend Watson's dramatic entry into Cairo Citadel. At Benha our transport joined us under Thomson, having covered the 42 miles in two days in spite of the difficulties of the way, and after losing two mules, run over by a train, which took no count of mules.

On the 18th we arrived at Cairo, bivouacked at the station, where we found work to do, and the next day bivouacked in the square of Kasr-el-Nil barracks.

During the first five weeks of the campaign not a man had been brought up for any offence, or had gone sick—we had been a band of brothers. Now, however, sickness broke out, chiefly ophthalmia and fever, largely due to exposure under intense sun, when working in water, at the dams.

To clear the hospitals, the men, though anxious to remain, were invalided, so that, including two Sergeants who had died, we lost nearly one-fourth of our strength, which, however, was more than made up by a draft from the 26th Company.

As soon as the Egyptians had cleared out of the barracks, we ceased bivouack and entered them.

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CHAPTER IX

SERVICE IN EGYPT—1882–4

VISIT TO PALESTINE AND MEETING GENERAL "CHARLIE" GORDON

Our work in Cairo consisted in completely cleaning out and renovating barracks, in remodelling sanitary arrangements, and in providing (or improving) kitchens. Large working parties of Egyptians were organized under Thomson to carry out these schemes.

We few officers alone occupied the spacious Mess-house, where the rats were extremely bold. Once at dinner, which was lighted by a solitary candle, a big fellow came running on the top of the table towards us. We all occupied one large room, sleeping on divans, and could hear them rolling away our pieces of soap, so these had to be planted on the handles of the door-keys.

On December 5 we moved to Abbassiyeh to push the heavy works there, leaving a detachment at Heluan with the Cavalry, while Thomson left for Malta to bring our heavy baggage.

At Abbassiyeh my Subalterns and I occupied half of the spacious Zafarin Palace standing in its own garden, while the Brigadier occupied the other half. We messed with the Royal Sussex Regiment in a house in the grounds, just outside our garden.

One day I was sitting upstairs in a great richly-upholstered saloon, when I heard a rushing of feet

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in the saloon below and some animal tearing up the stairs in frantic haste. The next minute Ponto was on me with exuberant expressions of delight. Thomson, who duly appeared with the baggage, said that Ponto became greatly excited when half a mile from the Palace and flew ahead of the party. This seems difficult to explain, for I had not been on that road for many hours previously, and it was six months since we had been together.

Ponto was the quaintest of dogs, and very devoted to me. One day he had been told off to accompany Heath and Thomson quail shooting. He started off with them, delighted to see the guns; but from an upstair window I saw him stop at the garden gate, and look back. He then raced back to the Palace and up the stairs to me, saying, "Are you not coming?" and on my replying, "No, good dog, you can go with them,"—off he raced again for fear he should be too late.

He was very courageous and used to chase the pariah dogs as if they were the scum of the earth. On one occasion however a big dog came out of a village, rallied the pack, and as I galloped up there was Ponto with his hackles up surrounded by the snarling pack, facing their champion. In another minute he would have been torn to pieces had not I jumped off and dispersed the crew with stones, or with the pretence of picking up stones, which is always effectual, as I proved on at least one other critical occasion.

Once I was riding accompanied by Heath's little terrier when two notoriously savage mastiffs rushed out on her. Ponto flew and was just in time to charge the leader in the flank and knock him over, though either dog could easily have killed him.

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While at Abbassiyeh I made a canoe in sections, for pack transport, and used it for duck shooting in the neighbourhood of Heliopolis.

On one occasion I came across an instance of the oppressive disregard of the rights of the Fellaheen by the Pashas, one of whom had blocked the canal carrying Nile water to the lands below him. I reported the case to my friend Watson, then Surveyor-General of the Egyptian Army, and the dam was promptly removed.

At Easter, 1883, a few officers and their wives made a party for Palestine. We rode all the way from Jaffa to Jerusalem, as there was then no railway. General Gordon was living near Jerusalem, in order to study the question of Biblical sites, and I was the bearer to him of a semi-official "feeler" as to whether he would return to the Soudan.

He was out when I called, but he wrote that nothing would induce him to return—unless, he added, he was given a completely free hand, which was never likely to happen. Yet he eventually went there, bound and fettered with orders, and hampered by those who quite failed to understand his magnetic personality and unique powers.

He took me about Jerusalem for two or three days. My friend, George Smith, Military Chaplain, of Rorke's Drift fame, who had begged to accompany us, expressed to me afterwards his delighted astonishment at the way Gordon would quote old Biblical language, in discussing such and such sites.

Gordon wrote out for me many sheets of plans, sketches and notes in connection with the much-discussed sites.

Our party was in Cook and Son's hands for a trip to Jericho and to the Dead Sea, and they did us right

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well—in fact sumptuously. We were all mounted, and the tents and everything, by going by short cuts, were always ready for us when we reached camp.

The first night out, Major Money and I sallied forth to see the Monastery of Mar Saba by moonlight. As we were walking down a deep gorge I remarked that if our Dragomen had known we were going they would have stopped us, as the country was disturbed. That afternoon a Bedouin had killed a goat close to our camp, and the owner of the goat had forthwith slain the offender and then fled for his life. There was now no City of Refuge to flee to, and the whole countryside was up to slay the murderer. Money gaily flourished a club he had bought, so I said, "If there is any trouble you can go in with your club." At that moment we turned a corner and were in the middle of a hurrying, excited posse of twenty armed men. I gave the Arabic salutation, and when we had safely passed them asked Money what he had done with the club. "Shoved it up my arm—shoved it up my arm!" And the best place for it, too.

All the passes, hills and watering places were watched, and on the third day the murderer was killed coming out of a cave to get water from the brook Cherith—possibly Elijah's cave!

On bathing in the Dead Sea one sat in—or one might almost say *on* the water. So buoyant is it that with hands clasped round the knees, the latter, with head and shoulders, were out of the water.

At Jericho one of the tent-men had a good bag of a species of white grouse, shot on the way over the hills. A shield is used, with apertures for gun and eyes. The gunner squats behind it and calls, wait-

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ing till he has got several birds in line before loosing off the fearsome long-barrelled engine. I borrowed the same, and having shot a quail on the wing, this was looked on as a terrible waste of time and material. I well understood this when I witnessed the operation of loading. Coarse gunpowder is first poured into the hand and well rubbed, then the resulting fine stuff is poured down the barrel to ensure priming, followed by the coarse. Next, some rag is torn from a piece wound round the body and rammed down; then big shot poured into the hand and thence into the gun—no measure used for either powder or shot—while more rag is torn off. Then a bag is swung from rear to front and a box taken out of it, whence a cap is produced, and finally the gun is handed back and I sally forth equipped with shield and "call."

On mentioning to Gordon my intention of going on leave that summer he said, "Don't go on leave this summer, for there will be serious trouble then, and it may possibly come down into Egypt." A prophecy, one may say, for that summer Hicks Pasha's Army was destroyed.

On returning to Abbassiyeh, Thomson told me yet another story of Ponto, with whom he had ridden out after quail. Now Thomson had only recently taken to shooting, and had not got into the way of quail, so, failing to bag, he gave it up, got on his pony, and rode off. Ponto determined to score off him, so continued to range and at last came to a dead point, maintaining the same in spite of being called off. Thomson thought he really must try again, so crept up to the "point," when the dog looked round, laughed in his face, and cantered off to try his joke once more. This time Thomson refused to stop

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and rode over a rise of ground out of sight, and waited for the dog. As he did not appear he rode back, and seeing his handsome assistant still rigid as a rock, made sure that this time there must be a quail under his very nose ; so for one more last try ! Ponto waited till he was close up, again laughed in his face, and said that was all, and now they would go home together comfortably.

Shortly after my return cholera broke out at Damietta and spread up the Nile. A Sergeant at Abbassiyeh said that if the cholera came there, he would be the first to die ; and so he was. The English officers with the Egyptian troops behaved splendidly when the Gippy doctors failed.

I had made all necessary plans for our garrison to move into the desert directly the plague reached Cairo. I was going to use the rails and chairs from the old railway to Suez, which were stacked with us. These would be laid on the old line, moving camp each day half a mile or so farther into the desert, thereby also providing sufficient occupation to keep men from brooding.

Riding out early one morning, however, I found that Sir Evelyn Wood had marched his Egyptian Brigade right through Cairo and our Garrison, and had occupied the very site we had decided on. I urged my Brigadier to see General Stephenson at once and get the Egyptians ordered off, but he said as the thing was done, it must stand. This was disastrous for our poor British troops, who had to move most hurriedly in different directions to unprepared camps. No Sappers had been sent with the Cavalry Regiment, who, in great heat after a very trying journey, had the exhausting work of camping. Cholera immediately broke out among

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them. It was not till the following day that Heath with a detachment of Sappers joined them.

After the '82 Campaign I had received Brevet majority, and now was left as acting Brigadier, while the original Brigade-Major, very little junior to me, remained as my Staff Officer. We soon had a large hospital formed. As there were many deaths, I started a cemetery at Abbassiyeh (afterwards consecrated) in order to avoid the fatigue and mental depression caused by funerals at the distant Military cemetery. My men were kept steadily at work, and after hours we joined in quoits and other amusements. The 17th Company was the only Unit in Egypt that had no case of cholera.

Scores of thousands of the inhabitants died. Riding back from Cairo, which I often had to visit, it was a comfort to get into the region of the great bonfires in the open suburbs, which one felt were changing the heavy air.

In case any one of our servants, or of our little Mess at the Zafaran Palace, should be attacked, I had laid in some mustard and it once proved useful. After Mess we generally played a quiet game of whist, at which Father Brindle—that very excellent R.C. Chaplain and afterwards Bishop—sometimes took a hand. One evening I suddenly felt very ill and took a glass of brandy. Finding it impossible to continue playing I went off quietly to my room, suffering very severe spasms. Tearing off my clothes I spread the mustard thick, and got into bed, when the instant relief caused me to fall asleep at once. Thomson, who knew that I hated being fussed over, did not follow me at once, though they all thought it was cholera. When he came I was most grateful to be awaked, for it was more than

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time to remove the mustard. He wanted to fetch the doctor from the barracks; but knowing how desperately hard he was worked I declined, and diagnosed my case as not being cholera.

In the small hours of the morning desperate spasms came on again, and on going into Thomson's adjoining room, I could hardly gasp that he might fetch the doctor. As the mustard could not now be applied in front, I laid it on all round my back, obtained instant relief and fell into a deep sleep. When the doctor arrived I said that I was all right and sorry to have troubled him. He declared that my remedies had been heroic, that I was absolutely flayed all round, and that the greatest care against cold was necessary. I was duly wrapped round, and so was able to carry on fairly as usual.

On August 29 I went home on leave and enjoyed sport of various kinds, including a trip down the Wye, starting just above Builth. One portage of a few yards was made in the dangerous rapids at Erwood, as to which more may be said later, and at Hay C.K. joined me in an excellent cruising canoe from Jordan of Hereford. Under Symond's Yat he dropped behind me, and ran on to a sunken rounded rock, a "sow's back," and upset, but swam safely ashore with his craft. After a long and somewhat anxious time he rejoined me and remarked that a *Zephyr* would not have upset under similar conditions. Some miles above Tintern my eldest brother appeared on the scene and was given C.K.'s canoe, while the latter occupied the well of the *Zephyr*, and I paddled, sitting on the afterdeck hatch with feet in the well. The passenger confessed that down one of the little rapids he hardly dared sneeze for fear of an upset. Next day, after renewed visits to

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the beautiful Abbey, John left and we continued our trip to Bath. There was half a gale blowing as we crossed the Severn Estuary to the Avon, about 8 miles, and the tide caused curious whirlpools among the sandbanks.

In 1878 John and I had crossed this from the Avon in a heavy fog, working for the Wye by compass. Now it was easy to miss the mouth, at any time, from a canoe, by reason of mudbanks, so it was comforting to have the bearing verified by a brig in mid-stream. I had begun that trip by sailing about the Solent and Isle of Wight, had then gone by train to Exeter, paddled down the Exe, sailed round to Torquay where John had joined me. After staying a couple of days with our old college friend, Huxley, we eventually put our canoes on to the Tamar at Endsleigh, for a day of rough adventure for my brother, whose canoeing experience had been but small.

The river proved very beautiful, very rocky, and full of rapids, down one of which John's canoe struck a rock so heavily that it upset. He jumped on the rock and held on to his craft and paddle, while I picked up the various articles floating down. The canoe's bilge was staved in, but effective repair was made with canvas, india-rubber solution and copper tacks during the luncheon hour. We soon were in rapid water with a maze of granite boulders in front, and before John could be stopped, the mischief was done.

In mid-stream there was a narrow gap between two big boulders through which the water boiled against another, a few feet in front. The wonderfully handy *Zephyr* can turn at right-angles in half her length, so we got safely through, but I then

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jammed her fast on a rock so as to be near the other. It was absolutely impossible for the *Rob Roy* to thread the gap. It simply drove into the front curling wave and sunk in the gap, while John, active as a cat, jumped on to one of the boulders. I stripped and with great difficulty got to him, and at last we raised the canoe. Then, still stripped, I tried to navigate her down the rapid, but she could not thread the rocks. We had to carry her three-quarters of a mile to the end of the rapids, after which John came back and ran along the bank while the *Zephyr* threaded the long maze of rocks with ease.

At last we reached the lock, which two men started to fill; but as there was no sign of its being opened we found the men had stopped and were playing us a trick. Upon this, unseen by them, we dragged over a meadow into the river and so turned the tables on them, when they came to look for us.

In the dark we reached the "Fishing" Inn; where, seeing a lantern, I shouted out, "Hallo, Joe! come and give us a hand." It happened to be the landlord, who bestirred himself to help us, and to get his best store clothes out of the chest for poor Jack! When he was invited after dinner to take a glass of wine, he had a good look at us in the full light and said, "I've never seen you before!"—"No more you have."—"Then how did you know my name was Joe?"—"Oh, a lucky shot for us!" How he did roar with laughter! and well he might, for he thought we were old friends.

We paddled up the Dart into the heart of the moor, and finally started from Bristol at 5 a.m. on a "doctor"—a Cape term for two eggs and a long tumbler of milk frothed up together—and on this

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we paddled till we reached Tintern at 2 p.m. after a fierce struggle against tide at the end.

The following year we two paddled down the Thames from Oxford to London, and the *Zephyr* shot every weir except Sandford Lasher, over which there was not enough water, and one other. The Bell weir seems impossible, but there was then enough water flowing over the masonry dam on the right bank to carry us, while, by lying at full length, my nose could just pass under the footway to the sluices. Of course no pace could be made, so the bow went straight down to the mast-hole, 4 feet, but no water could get in as the stepping for mast is solid. Since then the approach to many weirs has been blocked.

After so long a digression, which is entirely out of chronological order, it is more than time to get back to Alexandria, where I landed on November 30. When I was half-way to Cairo, hearing that my company was at Ramleh, I went back there, and found they had started for England under Gladstone's policy of scuttle, but had then been held back. Within a few hours of reaching our camp, a telegram ordered me to Cairo just in time to catch the next train.

The following day I was sent on special service to report on the Nile route for possible movement of a force into the Soudan.

As Colonel Fraser, R.E. (later Sir Thomas), Adjutant-General of the Egyptian Army, was proceeding as far as Assouan for the annual passing of recruits, I accompanied him, and could judge of the sad state of things prior to our intervention. In order to escape army service men blinded themselves in one eye, destroyed the drum of an ear, cut and cica-

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trized the trigger finger so as to render it permanently crooked, and otherwise maimed themselves. The doctor in attendance decided as to permanent disability, for an operation might at least rectify the fingers. Then the men would sometimes bend their knees to reduce their height under the standard measure, and when these were pushed straight would sink their heads into the shoulders, so that though at first one felt for them, yet later one was disgusted with their utter want of manliness. The Recruiting Staff were marvellously patient. Within the next few years under British Administration there was a complete change. The Service became popular, and the soldiers on leave would move with a swagger about the villages, being greatly admired.

We had to make a rough Survey of the environs of Assouan, and I soon found that my compass was useless, owing to local magnetic disturbance, so returned to the hotel for a box sextant. In the evening Fraser said he could make nothing of his compass work, so my box sextant had to complete the whole.

In the Boer War the magnetic disturbance in parts was most remarkable. I drew official notice to the danger of trusting to the compass for marches —especially for night marches—unless previously tested. I found places on the hills round Pretoria where the compass pointed due south instead of north.

Leaving Colonel Fraser, I went up as far as the Second Cataract in a dahabiyeh, surveying, etc., with Corporal Taylor of my company as assistant.

At Assiout, hearing that a large caravan had arrived overnight from Darfour, by the long desert route, to avoid the Mahdi trouble on the Nile, I

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visited the camp of 1,200 camels, and three horses. The caravan had brought £20,000 worth of gum, feathers, etc. The last waterless stage was of eight days, yet the animals appeared quite fit, the camels having of course been previously trained for a waterless journey.

On February 9, 1884, I was sent to Suakin on special service under Admiral Sir W. Hewitt, V.C., so once again my company was left in Heath's capable hands.

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CHAPTER X

EASTERN SOUDAN CAMPAIGN—1884

Arrived at Suakin, my first duty was to consider the Defences, and advise the Admiral and Valentine Baker Pasha. On February 18 we steamed to inspect landing places at Trinkitat and neighbourhood, with a view to an attempt to relieve Tokar, which was besieged by the Mahdi's forces, under Osman Digna.

The landing, on a good open beach, at Trinkitat, was well covered by the entrenchments, thrown up before Baker's disastrous action at El Teb. His men could dig, but would not fight—indeed, they were not soldiers, but gendarmerie and riff-raff thrown into the Force against their will. Sir Evelyn Wood's recently formed Egyptian Army could not yet be trusted against the Mahdi's fanatical fighters.

On returning to Suakin, Baker Pasha inspected the 10th Hussars, who had been intercepted on their way home from India, and had been mounted on the Arabs of an Egyptian Cavalry regiment. Baker mounted me on the beautiful Arab which had practically saved his life at El Teb, and told me the whole story of the disaster, which I had already heard from his Staff—how his men were formed into square on the report by the Cavalry scouts of the enemy's approach, and how in feverish fear they opened fire on Baker and his Staff as they fell back to enter the square. They were destroyed by a force of one-

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fourth their strength, for they refused to make even a feeble effort in defence of their lives, merely kneeling down and waiting to be killed. After the second battle of El Teb I saw the heaps of nearly 3,000 black bodies—a gruesome sight!

The enemy had cut the line of retreat to Trinkitat, and as all efforts to make any men fight had failed, Baker's Staff Officer, FitzRoy Hay, finally induced him to leave the Field. Two Dervishes, with spear and shield, closed to bar his way, but he held straight for them. Then, knowing that even if he rode them down, they would get their spears into him or the horse, at the last second he jinked his steed to one side and shot past. As a last chance the men threw their spears, which Hay, who was riding in his wake, saw pass close to his back.

A few years prior to this, Baker had commanded the Rearguard of the Turkish Army with consummate skill in the Russo-Turkish War. I happened to remark to my namesake, commanding the 10th, that it was very doubtful whether his men could really get at the Dervishes with the sword, but he replied that in India his men could tent-peg with their swords, and that on these wonderfully handy Arabs they could not fail to account for the enemy. However, I was far from convinced, and after the second battle of El Teb swords were discarded in favour of spears taken from the enemy. On the 25th General Sir Gerald Graham, V.C., proceeded with the Force to Trinkitat.

On the 28th we marched out across the wide boggy lagoon to "Fort Baker," and that night the following officers of the "Intelligence Department" dined together in camp: Colonel Ardagh, our head; Baker Pasha; Burnaby of Khiva fame, said to be

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the strongest man in the army, and now smarting under the recent El Teb disgrace; Green, R.E.; Schaefer and myself; with one guest, Slade of the Cavalry.

On the following day, at El Teb, a small affair, as battles count, Slade was killed, with sword and spear, in the Cavalry charge; Baker, Burnaby and Green were badly wounded; and Schaefer's horse was hit while we were talking, so I lent him my spare horse.

Baker Pasha and I were in the square together, while the enemy were firing case or canister from the guns they had captured at Tokar, which had fallen by this time. The range was long for that class of shot, so the balls were hitting the sand short of the men and ricochetting over their heads. We were discussing the situation when Baker clapped his hand to his face, at the same time twitching his bridle so that the horse spun right round, yet without shifting him in the saddle. I thought a pebble must have hit him, as he quietly rode to the ambulance and in five minutes returned to me with face strapped up. The Cavalry Brigade-Major had ridden into the square to ask in which direction the main body of the enemy were retiring. But just after we had told him, we saw that the enemy had turned back against our front again, full of fight. I asked Baker, who seemed heedless of his wound, if the Cavalry ought not to be advised. "Certainly, if anyone can get to them," he replied, so out I galloped, but soon saw that they had recognized the real hostile position, and therefore returned to view the affair through our glasses. Where the men rode fairly knee to knee, the enemy cleared off right and left, but where the order was open, the

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Dervishes would drop low behind little bushes, then hamstring the passing horse and kill the rider.

Though the Cavalry inflicted hardly any casualties, yet their gallant action broke up the hostile mass, and so the Infantry was able to push on, and a complete victory was gained very quickly.

That night Baker became feverish and Sir Gerald sent him back to H.M.S. *Sphinx*, at Trinkitat. The Naval surgeon found a 2½ oz. iron ball lodged in his cheek, having broken into the palate. The marvel was that he was not knocked off his horse! The wound caused much trouble for years.

Having been detailed to count the enemy's dead, I had full evidence of their unpleasant practice of feigning death in order to slay anyone who came near them.

Green was invalided home, so handed over his English hunter to me, for on this night two Gippy troopers deserted with the two Arabs which had been put at my service.

On March 1 we marched for Tokar—an old walled place. As there was no guide I was ordered, if I found it, to reconnoitre the easiest point of attack. But it happened that the enemy fled before my eyes, so that the Force came up and entered the place. On the 3rd we marched to the hostile camp at Afafeet, but found it deserted. On the 4th I rode back to Trinkitat over Baker's old battlefield, which had been avoided, in our advance on El Teb, and with very good reason. On the 7th we embarked with Head-quarters for Suakin, and on the 11th marched out to "Baker's Zeriba," *en route* to Tamaai, near which place we zeriba-ed, being fired on during the night and early morning.

Owing to the slow operation of filling the men's

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water bottles, the two brigades were late in falling up in square in front of the zeriba. As the Cavalry scouts had informed General Graham that the enemy was assembled in a big khor, or valley, in front, he was anxious to advance, and did so with the leading Brigade, while Buller's was echeloned on the right rear, rather farther back than might appear desirable.

When near the edge of the khor, which it was desirable to reach in order to have the enemy at a disadvantage, the front face of the square received an order to charge, thereby creating big and dangerous gaps, between it and the side faces, which were advancing in column of fours. The order, if given at all, should have been for the whole square to advance at the double. Colonel Clery, the Adjutant-General, thinking the men had got out of hand, ordered me to gallop to one flank to try and check the movement, while he rode to the other; but just then I saw a great mass of Dervishes rise from a little side khor, which ran into the big one, making for the gap on our right.

I begged the officer commanding the rear face of the square, which was not threatened, to throw forward two companies to fill the gap and meet the imminent shock; but it needed a man of quick decision to grasp the situation and act instantly. I then galloped for the gap.

Our men on the flank were falling back at a walk, turning round to fire, and one recognized that by falling back, though suffering heavy casualties, they gave a better field of fire for Buller's Brigade, which swept lanes through the enemy.

I was retreating with the men, firing my revolver at close quarters over my horse's back and so not looking where we were going, when the horse came

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to a standstill. Looking round, I saw we were blocked by a mimosa bush round the sides of which the men were pressing, to whose difficulty it was impossible to add. My revolver was empty, so I thought "That's the end of E.W." Then I remembered that I was on a big English hunter, who had had no deterrent experience of the mimosa thorn, so roused him up vigorously, and he got over and through it.

We jostled a man on the other side, to whom I apologized and hoped he was not hurt. A poor fellow badly speared said, "Don't leave me," so he was told to hang on to my boot, but after a few steps he said, "Oh, I can't," so I leant down low and somehow or other—one hardly knows how—managed to lift him up and bear him a short distance. On his becoming unconscious he was gently let down on the ground, for by that time the flank attackers had been wiped out, though the Black Watch in front face were still engaged in hand-to-hand fighting, the rear rank having been turned about.

Then, seeing a group of men, pale and dazed, wandering to the rear and a Subaltern shouting himself hoarse in efforts to stop them, I adopted the ancient procedure, whipped out my sword and raising it aloft cried, "Rally to me, lads!" This they did, so I fell them into line, numbered them off, and formally handed them over to the officer.

Just then the enemy began a very dangerous movement. They poured out of the khor on our left, with a view of cutting in on our disorganized square, on the side where there was no 2nd Brigade to slate them. Remembering that the Cavalry should be on our left rear, though out of sight, I

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galloped to advise them, but almost at once saw a cloud of dust. They were coming!

I stopped to see a scene worth seeing!

When the Dervishes saw the Cavalry racing up, in echelon of troops, these daring footmen instantly turned to meet them with spear and shield—a wonderful sight! The leading troop swung round on their exposed left flank, dismounted and poured in an enfilading volley, which unexpected action took all the heart out of the enemy, so that they hurried back to their friendly khor with all despatch. Afterwards I asked Colonel "Eddy" Wood, commanding the leading regiment, how this was done so cleverly. He said that after their experience at El Teb they had decided to adopt fire tactics on certain occasions. He had been able to signal to the leading troop, though at full gallop, his regiment being thoroughly trained in silent drill.

The material effect of a volley given by men racing up in that manner could only be small—I only saw two or three wounded helped into the khor—but the moral effect was all-persuading. This most valuable work of the Cavalry was not, however, sufficiently recognized.

There were other vivid and interesting episodes, very different from the run of modern battles; but no attempt is being made to give more than some of my own personal experiences.

As usual, I was told off to count the enemy's dead, having four troopers as escort, owing to the Dervishes so often shamming death with intent to kill. The only Sapper of my company with the Force was killed in this way while crossing the battlefield on duty for Ardagh, two hours after the fighting was over. Some shammers rose up and

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killed him with their knives, lying down again, and covering their heads with their "gibbas." Fortunately some of our friendly Abyssinians saw where they lay down, and hunted them up.

Now it was impossible for me to be in any way accurate unless I marked the lines up to which the count had been taken. My troopers were therefore planted as movable posts, though an order existed that no solitary man should move over the battlefield, owing to the risks from these shammers. Perceiving that the Provost-Marshal had made a prisoner of one of my posts, I rode up, explained, and took full responsibility. Once it was necessary for me to call up a trooper to shoot a dangerous shammer.

Within a small space at the right corner of the square where the gap was, there lay 600 dead Dervishes.

The burning of the hostile standing camp at Tamaai was a grand pyrotechnic display. The blazing thatched roofs, the continuous roar of exploding ammunition, the bursting of shells, the pattering of stores of cartridges, with the rolling reverberations among the rugged hills, made a scene to be remembered.

On March 14, Head-quarters were back at Suakin. Next day I went on reconnaissance to Handoub, where I found abundant water, and where we made a zeriba on the 18th for a force under Sir Herbert Stewart. Thence I accompanied him on reconnaissance to Otao, and to Tambuk 26 miles from Suakin, to inspect water sources, etc., and to make rough Surveys. On one of such duties, escorted by a troop of Cavalry, I reconnoitred through the Waratab hills in the direction of Tamineb, finding

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a good well at the foot of the rough pass, and then, circling the foot-hills on the Suakin side back to Handoub, found that the two ends of my mapped route met nicely.

The country between this and Suakin had been sketched by another officer and a map compiled, according to which the well was within an easy ride of Suakin. General Graham, being anxious to see if the well would prove useful for the advance on Tamineb, rode out with a strong escort, but after riding some 5 or 6 miles, the spot where I said the well was situated seemed nearly as far off as ever. He said he could go no farther, but I asked to be allowed to go on alone to verify the actual distance. Two troopers were told off to go with me, but these I soon dropped at a comfortable spot in thin "bush," for in case of trouble I would rather be alone.

There was an error of some 3 miles in the map, which had to be revised, but before this was done the following episode resulted:—

Next day the Force had to assemble at the first Zeriba on the way to Tamineb, and the Staff Officer who had made the Survey was directed to lead Sir Herbert's troops from Handoub there. On riding out, however, to the "First" zeriba, I met this officer riding in to Suakin, and expressed my surprise. He said he had sent them a compass bearing to march by. I told him that the "bearing" given would take them 3 miles clear of our camp, right into bush and the enemy's country. He still maintained that it was at Suakin he was wanted. Arrived at the Zeriba, I borrowed a fresh horse, for mine had been 30 miles that day, and started through the bush to intercept the head of Stewart's advance, allowing for the time he had been marching on the

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wrong bearing. I took upon myself to halt the Advance party and then rode back to the Main Body, to be greeted by Stewart with "Well, Wood, we are very glad to see you, for we know we are all wrong."

Next day our second zeriba was made on the way to Tamineb; and the following day we occupied the enemy's camp, which was situated in a rocky valley in a maze of rugged hills. The Mounted Infantry had worked admirably over this difficult country, assisted to some extent by friendly Amarars, who wore broad red bands round their fuzzy heads, to distinguish them from the enemy.

There had, however, been little opposition, as the Dervishes had been nearly annihilated, and Osman Digna had fled.

Here, in the deep khor, ran a rivulet with a little cascade, the most refreshing sight that ever greeted me in North Africa. The water supply was in consequence far more assured than at Tamaai.

That same day Head-quarters rode back to Suakin, embarking on the 29th, and arriving at Cairo on April 3.

At Abbassiyeh we carried on the usual work, enlivened by grand gallops over the desert and a little cricket. Once when quail shooting in the neighbourhood of Heliopolis, I recognized a black-tented Bedouin encampment and raised their war cry. Out tumbled a host of piccaninnies who surrounded me, uproariously delighted, dancing and shouting, and doubtless prepared to follow me as leader.

General Earle, who afterwards, to our very great sorrow, was killed at Kirbekan, was now in command at Abbassiyeh.

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I just missed Gordon on his way through Cairo to Khartoum: who knows whether he might not have taken me on with him! As it was I very nearly joined him later, for Captain Kelham, H.L.I., and I were both under orders to accompany Lieut.-Colonel Stewart, who was on his way to Khartoum.

Hearing that a famous German traveller, Sweinfurt, had just arrived from the Soudan by the desert route in order to avoid the Mahdi, I called on him to learn more of the country and its condition than I had been able to gather from books. When I mentioned Gordon, he exclaimed, "Gordon!" and then with most expressive and dramatic gesture—"Gordon is the most remarkable man that ever was. You say Gordon is 100 miles off.—Gordon is here!"

During the two or three days that Stewart was in Cairo neither Kelham nor I got in touch with him. Yet one evening General Sir Archibald Alison, as he shook us two by the hand, wished us good luck as we were to start next day. However, that very next morning our orders were cancelled, and Stewart went alone.

It is just possible that Khartoum might have been held for a few days longer, for I should have devoted my attention to defence by blockhouses with rifle batteries. The falling Nile would have exposed the flank of the position, while at the same time the numbers of the garrison and their powers of resistance would have been reduced. In any case I should have been of some comfort to my old friend, the lonely hero.

It was mentioned in Chapter IX how General Gordon told me at Jerusalem that he would only go back to the Soudan if given freedom in action.

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Unfortunately he accepted the task of saving and withdrawing the garrisons in the Soudan under certain conditions, one of which was that he would not go out of Khartoum to effect this. Our Government had learnt nothing of his marvellous power and influence with natives. I am convinced that when he saw the hopelessness of the situation, he would have visited the Mahdi, who looked on Gordon as a very holy man. The result could hardly have been as bad as the long drawn-out, miserable business proved to be.

There is moreover fair warrant for his success in such an action, as evidenced by the following instance. When Gordon was Governor-General and engaged in destroying the slave trade, he happened to be at a frontier post far south of Gondokoro, when 3,000 slave-hunting Arabs under Zobeir came against him, sworn to kill him. Now the small garrison was not equal to meeting the Arabs in battle, so Gordon rode off on his swift riding-camel, unescorted, into the middle of the hostile camp. He said to Zobeir that he had better give in, for it was no use fighting against him, and such was his influence that the Arabs dispersed, and Zobeir's son came over to Gordon, being given a small command.

One is saddened to find that a writer, some five and thirty years after Gordon's death, should, without any personal knowledge, have revived a libel on that good and great man who spent himself for others.

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CHAPTER XI

SUAKIN AND CAIRO—1884–5

On June 24, 1884, the 17th Co. R.E. left for Suakin to prepare for a fresh campaign in the Eastern Sudan.

On July 1 we arrived at Suakin in intense heat. In ordinary time Europeans found it difficult to live there during the summer, and usually resorted to the hill station of Sinkat, but that was no longer available, being in hostile hands. I therefore expected to knock up immediately, as my liver had gone wrong. However, the work and situation were so intensely interesting that the mind mastered the body. My experience has shown me that the worse the climatic conditions, the more important it is to have plenty of interesting work to do, instead of lying in tents. This was proved in the case of the Navy at Suakin, where the men lay on deck under awnings, and went down with sunstroke like flies when work had to be done in the sun. Of course in this case the trouble was difficult to avoid.

A notable instance occurred when an attack by Osman Digna was expected, and a Naval Detachment of fifteen men was landed, to drag a light field gun a few hundred yards, to man a small redoubt. Of the party twelve went down with sunstroke before the job was done.

On the 3rd our tents were pitched on Quarantine Island, which we had entirely to ourselves. We

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were briskly fired on, but the shooting was so wild that no notice was taken of it.

This island was separated from the mainland on the side of Handoub by a shallow lagoon about 100 yards wide and easily fordable.

Next day, shelters and breastwork were commenced, the total strength of the company being only about 110.

On the 7th, works for the approaching expedition having been approved, the same were pushed vigorously in spite of the intense heat. The average maximum temperature for the thirty-one days of August in perfect shade was 120°; and the average minimum at night, outside, where it was coolest, was 91°.

The temperature in the "Double Indian Hospital" marquee rose to 128° before we were able to erect a spacious airy hut, with the 3-inch planks eventually to be used for the flooring of ship piers. As the men worked in their shirts, the "spine-protectors" were sewn high up on the backs, so that the neck would be protected when bending at work.

We had hardly any cases of sunstroke, though three men died of heat apoplexy, two of whom were practically the only men who gave any trouble through drink. On the other hand the absolute necessity of a stimulant on special emergency was made abundantly clear when a tremendous downpour of rain broke on us, and the temperature fell over 30° in a few minutes. We had all to turn out to clear the camp of water and were drenched through and through. To obviate the effects of chill, we officers took a tot of neat spirit, and the men took the same—all except my nine highly valued teetotalers, who would take nothing. All nine were in

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hospital with fever that night, and eight of them were invalided from the station. Our Irish doctor said they had conscientious scruples about taking a stimulant, though, as he was told, he might have given it to them as medicine. The rest suffered little from the sudden chill.

In the hot season the natives, of whom we employed about 400, still worked very long hours—considerably longer than the Sappers—while the officers had less leisure than any.

Among other piers, two were being constructed for ships, drawing any depth of water, to lie against. A light railway was also being made across the island and lagoon to the mainland. As the embankment for the line would give easy hostile access, a guardhouse was made with a fixed battery of twenty rifles to sweep the top and sides, each rifle being carefully sighted before being fixed. As the rifles were loaded, the sentry could fire them by running his finger along them very rapidly, while, with spare cartridges on a tray below, he could load and fire two rifles quicker than one under usual conditions. The shooting was as effective by night as by day over the area covered.

A senior officer had come down as C.R.E., but he left me very free to carry on, and when he had to be invalided in the autumn, I became C.R.E.

Of the first five piers the two largest had heads long enough to unload from two holds of a ship at once. We obtained splendid timber from Alexandria, the baulks for piles being 40 feet long and 14¾ inches square. The native divers built the piers well and solidly up to a depth of 9 feet with coral blocks, brought in dhows from the reefs outside the harbour. While awaiting the heavy timber, I pro-

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posed to use trestles of 12-inch spars which could be purchased locally. The divers reported the bottom sound where the feet had to rest. Knowing, however, the treacherous nature of coral bottoms, I decided to test the same effectively—a platform was firmly fixed on a 12-inch spar which was stayed in position. On this platform stood two groups of four natives, each group with a heavy four-handled "monkey."

At the word, both monkeys were driven down simultaneously. The result was startling, for the whole jumped down 3 or 4 feet, pitching men and monkeys into the sea. Any idea of trestles had in consequence to be abandoned. My notes record driving a 10½-inch spar for one of the small piers 16 feet into the coral bottom in 4½ hours with a hand monkey.

The ends of the great square piles were merely adzed to a circle and ringed with iron, no special shoes being necessary. Our blacksmiths were kept busy at all necessary ironwork.

As the eventual length of all the ship piers, exclusive of their heads, and omitting boat piers, was 1,800 feet, it was a work of considerable time.

Two grand sticks, about 60 feet long and 18 inches square, had been brought from Alexandria, slung on either side of the ship. They proved invaluable, as derricks, for unloading the light railway engines, the ships having none equal to the job. Eventually they were bolted, as waling or rubbing pieces, on the fronts of the two chief piers, and so tended to save the piles from the sea worms, which chiefly attack at the waterline, where these great timbers were fixed.

Outside the head of one pier the coral bottom

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rose so high that only a depth of 20 feet of water existed, and we had therefore to blow it up. After the natives had secured all the killed and stunned fish, I went out in my canoe and found a fine fellow swimming slowly round and round. With the help of a swimmer he was got into the canoe and was presented, weighing 35 lb., to the men's Mess.

Fish of all colours, shapes and sizes simply swarmed, and in the clear depths one could see a swarm of little fellows fleeing from a fleet of larger ones, who again seemed to be chased by yet bigger fish. When bathing, I used to frighten tiny brilliantly coloured fish into branching coral, and after breaking it off with the feet would hold it aloft and enjoy a good look at the struggling little wonders.

Big fish came at night to feed in the shallow lagoon, over which the Navy would sometimes turn their searchlight, producing a beautiful sight. The great fish would rush over the long shallows to the deep water, taking prodigious leaps, forming arcs of gleaming silver, and making a far-sounding roar.

Amongst other works, the defences of Suakin were improved, as also the water supply.

In the intense heat the paraffin, even in sealed metal drums, rapidly evaporated through the metal, if exposed to the air, so it had to be stored underground.

Sometimes we officers, after working long hours in the sun, felt no desire to eat till water had been soused over our heads and shoulders, soaking our flannel shirts, and then sitting in any draught that might happen to be—certainly not good for the liver!

On August 14 I handed over the piers severally to my Subalterns, and then the strain on the mind

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being off, knowing that all things would go on perfectly, I instantly went down with acute liver.

On the third night an unusually heavy fire was opened on us across the water at about 400 yards range. That effectually cured me, for I tumbled out of bed with the rest, and in marvellously short time gave them volleys by sections, which soon cleared them off. The Navy said our volleys were the perfection of crispness.

The Governor, General Sir Arthur Lyon Fremantle, having ordered me to Cairo, I started on August 23 on the Khedivial steamer *Hoddeida*, whose deck was crowded with pilgrims for Mecca, who had been given a free passage. Many of these had left the West Coast of Africa two or three years before, undergoing many hardships and seeing many comrades fall by the way.

I was commissioned to approach the Turkish Authorities at Jedda with a view to the removal of the recent interdict on the supply of vegetables to Suakin. The matter needed discreet and quiet handling; but very soon the much-needed vegetables began to flow our way again.

I just went outside the walls and looked towards the holy city of Mecca. Strange indeed was it to know that one could not cross the intervening 40 miles alive!

There was a good Bazaar at Jedda, the fruit and vegetables being brought in by camel from a distance of 100 miles.

Arrived at Cairo, I waited on Sir Evelyn Baring, with whom was Lord Northbrook, and explained fully the situation. I urged that a "Newmarket" course, 100 yards wide, should be cut through the bush to Handoub, that a strong post should be made there,

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supported by an intermediate one, thereby securing that most important water centre; this at the same time would give security to the Hadendoas, who would be friendly if given protection against Osman Digna. The "course" would be cut before any convoy were taken out, and at any threat of attack the sides could be pulled in, to close the zeriba front and rear. On being asked what additional troops would be required to our existing garrison of Marines and ourselves, I replied, speaking for myself only, "One British regiment and one good company of Mounted Infantry." My notes show the whole scheme in detail. The decision instantly given was, that such an increase was "simply prohibitive!"

I had received the brevet of Lieut.-Colonel for the last campaign, and now was appointed acting Director of Army Telegraphs until the arrival of Colonel Webber, R.E. At this time the temperature at Cairo was very low, being only 70° to 75° at 10 a.m. —very different from Suakin conditions!

At the outset of my work on the Telegraphs I failed to agree with the Civil Telegraph Authorities on an important point. There were many hundred miles of telegraph wire in the country which they proposed to use between Cairo and Assouan, while my contention was that the existing wires between those places should suffice if properly looked after and worked, and that the spare wire would be most urgently needed in the advance beyond Assouan. Fortunately at this juncture my brother C.K. arrived from employment on postal telegraphs in England, where the R.E. worked a District in order to keep them in training for war.

The day after arrival, though ignorant of the

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people and the language, he started off to inspect the line and the offices, riding on a donkey, which one day carried him 42 miles. He conclusively established the fact that, when worked by the Military, the existing lines would suffice to Assouan.

Sir Frederick Stephenson, Commanding in Egypt, had named me as C.R.E. Dongola when the Expedition for the relief of Khartoum should be in motion, but on Lord Wolseley's arrival, those orders were cancelled, as he considered my proper place was Suakin.

I dined with Lord Wolseley, who as usual was very pleasant, though I could not take his view about the Expedition. Practically all the instructed opinion in Egypt was in favour of the Suakin route, the route used by the Egyptians. When the Nile route had been definitely decided on, General Stephenson urged to be allowed to pass nuggars above the Second Cataract, when river conditions were favourable. But no, we were not allowed to take even this action to aid in what we knew would be a most difficult business.

As a matter of fact, after the 1884 campaign I had got out tables of the number of camels required to move 5,000 men, of all arms, in one body from Suakin to Berber or in columns of 500 on successive days in order to ease the water question; with lists of the necessary receptacles for carrying water under varying conditions. At the close of that campaign, Sir Herbert Stewart, Ardagh and others of us had strongly urged putting a small British force into Berber, then garrisoned by Egyptian troops, which would practically have secured that most important post on the Nile. At that time all opposition had been crushed, and the Hadendoas

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had given in, so that the operation would have been simple and comparatively inexpensive.

I have a note on this matter: "Remember Gladstone's statement in the House that Berber in the hands of the enemy would not affect the military position! Yet it was the key of the position, and Khartoum need never have fallen."

I was very anxious about Gordon and his Mission, and became more so on perceiving that no early purchase of camels had been made at Dongola. I frankly declared my opinion that Government was gambling on the chance of something turning up to render the advance on Khartoum unnecessary. Indeed, when camels were bought, their numbers were so inadequate that, at a very critical time, a most serious delay occurred in moving Stewart's force across the desert to Metemmeh.

On October 3 I started for Suakin, having had a lively discussion the previous evening on the steps of Shepheard's Hotel, with Wolseley's Staff, who were upholding the Nile route as against that of Suakin. At last I said to Colonel Butler (later Lieut.-General Sir William), "If you were at Suakin would you have nothing to say for that route?" Whereupon he placed his finger significantly along the side of his nose and softly said, "That would be a very different situation"; and so I left. However, on hearing who I was from Colonel Brackenbury (later General the Rt. Hon. Sir Henry), he ran after me and said how valuable had been my report on the Nile to him as Chief of the Intelligence at the War Office. I could not refrain from saying, "And yet in spite of it, and in spite of the equally adverse report of the Naval expert, the Nile is adopted!"

We reached Suakin on the 7th, coming in for

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some torrential weather, for an unusually heavy thunderstorm broke on the 9th and a still heavier one on the 12th, when tents were blown down and shelters flooded.

Heath walked with me to see the water coming down, and we estimated that over half a million gallons a minute were coming into the Shatta reservoir. While there we saw the bank near the right Waer Fort carried away, after which the flood broke its way through the entrenchments to the sea. Later, on riding out 4 or 5 miles towards Handoub, the former hard level ground was found to be deeply scored all over, one such new channel being 40 yards wide. We thereupon made a note that bridging for the new railway would be necessary on a considerable scale, otherwise large sections would be certainly breached. We provided ample culverts for our light line, but the contractors for the permanent line, later on, failed to realize the conditions, and great lengths of railway were swept away.

The whole plain was covered with frogs, great and small, where we had never before seen a frog. Presumably they were lying dormant in the sand, but their existence in the extremely hot and dry ground is remarkable.

About the middle of October, the Suakin Sporting Club was started, with me as President. The first event was a cricket match, "Ashore *v.* Afloat," in which "Ashore" proved successful. The ground had to be reached by water, so the Sappers quickly made a boat pier 200 feet long to serve it.

Some time later, when playing a match, an alarm was given of the approach of hostile Camelry, so we drew stumps as our only defensive weapons, and

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fell back on the shore. However, we soon resumed the game, for the Camelry proved to be our own friendlies.

At one of the Sports Meetings the Black Battalion pulled over the Navy and R.E. in the Tug-of-War. Fortunately, however, the Royal Marines had in their team some of the R.M. Artillery team which had recently won the Army Championship—grand fellows they were—and the Blacks were pulled over. The Governor had expressed to me his anxiety lest the Blacks should win, for there would then be no holding them and ructions would be sure to occur.

On October 31 I was riding with a gun some way out when two heads and necks were spied in low scrub, which I at once recognized as bustards. I had not seen any since old Cape days, but I instantly adopted the old method of riding round them in a narrowing circle, whereupon they duly squatted according to plan. One was bagged at 30 yards, but my untrained Arab plunged so violently at the shot that the gun could not be used on the other, which sailed off, though I was able to mark it down.

Having placed the bird so that it could be found, we circled the other again successfully, but when the gun was raised the horse again plunged all over the place, so the gun was wildly let off: the only result was one dropped feather.

After this there was a long flight but I got once more within 30 yards, when I jumped off with the rein over my arm, but the horse pulled me back so much that a shot was impossible. By then we were so far into hostile territory that the chase was given up. In due course our little Mess welcomed an excellent bird weighing 10 lb. During our whole

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stay in those parts we only heard of one other bustard being seen, and that was a bigger species, which weighed 20 lb. and was killed with the rifle.

My best bag of sandgrouse was fourteen on one morning before breakfast, so my gun was helpful, no one else seeming to have one.

As the little railway advanced to serve the needs of the future camp, it was necessary to protect it by blockhouses which were erected in the day. A description of one may be of interest:—

Ground-floor 16 feet square, with sandbag walls 3 feet thick, having continuous loopholing; and the upper floor 21 feet square, with loopholed timber walls 9 inches thick. The upper floor was placed diagonally across the lower one, so that through the floor of the four projecting corners rifles could command the ditch surrounding the building. The sides of the ditch were nearly vertical and the earth was thrown partly against the walls and partly into the glacis, so that the effective obstacle was 14 feet wide and 9 deep. On the roof was a tent for the officer, and sentry-box for the look-out.

It was left to Heath to organize the working parties so as to complete this design in the day, the materials being dumped overnight 1,000 yards from the site so as to minimize the chance of the enemy recognizing our intention. The organization of a mass of natives, working with hoe and basket in so confined a space, while the Sappers built, proved perfect, and the blockhouse was practically finished in a trifle over eight hours, and was occupied that same night by thirty Sappers under Thomson. There was no firing from the work that night, but there was the next night when we were relieved by the R.M.

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About this time I was put in command of all the defences on this side of the town.

The improvement of the water supply was most important. Wells were sunk on all sides, but in many cases the water proved brackish though in others good. In two days four natives would sink a well 21 feet deep and 3½ feet in diameter, for £1; when a couple of wells were only a few yards apart, a gallery would be driven to connect them at the bottom, so as to increase the storage capacity and necessitate the use of only one pump.

Our system of payment for natives had been a dollar a head to the Sheiks who supplied the men with food and water, which we had to supplement. As we found that the men got very little cash we decided to pay Sheiks and men separately, though this involved extra trouble. Some interesting scenes were the result. The gangs squatted in circles, silent, expectant, and yet hardly crediting the good time that was coming. The interpreter in the middle of a ring rapidly put a dollar into each man's hand, and, when the circle was complete, all sprang into the air, yelling and dancing with delight. All the other circles in turn broke from silent statues into the very noisiest of joyous children. We suspected that the Sheiks would still manage to get more than their share in payment for rations sold to the workers.

At the end of November an entrenched closed work was constructed near "Sandbag" redoubt, and was garrisoned by 130 R.M. By this more ground was denied to the enemy who, early in December, became more aggressive. On December 8, as Gregory's Egyptian Cavalry was going out to form the usual screen, they were ambushed, but sending

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back for reinforcements, they inflicted thirty casualties, and behaved with great steadiness in the presence of an estimated hostile force of 1,500. This Cavalry, by good and constant training and leading, had become most reliable.

On December 30, Lieut.-General Sir Frederick Stephenson, Commanding in Egypt, visited us and expressed his satisfaction.

Major Chermside, R.E. (later Lieut.-General Sir Herbert), attached to the Egyptian Army, was head of our "Intelligence." He had raised some friendly Camelry who, having been given rifles, somewhat interfered with our comfort. They liked to play practical jokes, pretending to be enemies and letting off their rifles in irresponsible playfulness. Having caught them at this once or twice I finally drove some of them into the town, after which their manœuvres were restricted.

On February 1, General Fremantle conducted a reconnaissance towards Hasheen in order to test the situation, but was under superior orders not to bring on a serious engagement. At 5 a.m. we started from Sandbag redoubt with the following force which had been landed four days previously, viz.—two guns R.H.A., one squadron 19th Hussars and the 1st Berkshire Regiment; as also Gregory's Egyptian squadron, a few R.E. and a few Native Camel Corps.

The Infantry in square halted some 4 miles out in fairly open ground, while the General went on with the rest. After another couple of miles he halted in the bush with his little Staff and a few orderlies, while Major Kelly (later Major-General Sir William) went on with the mounted force. These found the enemy in force about 1½ miles farther at the foot of the Waratab Mountain and full of fight.

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The bush country being quite unsuited to Mounted action, Kelly retreated rapidly and skilfully, well away to our right.

Captain Stopford (later Lieut.-General the Hon. Sir Frederick) was starting to the front with an order to Kelly, when I suggested that the firing showed him to be in rapid retreat and the only chance was back to the right. It needed much urgency to induce the General to get back when he could. A few minutes later when Stopford returned to the spot (circumstances having rendered his message quite unnecessary) he was horrified to find the enemy all over it, so made good his retreat with all despatch.

The enemy would not follow into the more open ground, but we had disproved the report which said that they would come to terms with us on any show of force.

The R.H.A. horses, having once watered at our new Shatta well, refused the water from another well, from which they had previously drunk freely, and the Hussar horses followed their fastidious action.

Another two-storied blockhouse, similar to the "Sandbag" previously described, was constructed towards Hasheen between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. It had also a revetted gun emplacement outside, the whole being surrounded by a thorn zeriba, with mines in advance.

Talking of mines: our experience had been curious. The Navy had started them early in the so-called siege of Suakin, for the enemy used to come at night into "Baker's" unoccupied little redoubt and fire from it. So the Navy placed a mine there, to be fired electrically from a launch on which the

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sailors kept watch. They heard nothing, but the next morning the mine was gone, the wires having been quietly cut. Next night a similar mine was again laid, but further arranged to explode, if lifted. The enemy again cut the wires; but saying, "There is more in this business than we can see," judiciously left the mine where it was, and so it remained for a week. Then there was a big Tamasha at Handoub when young bloods were dared to carry it off, losing nine lives as the result. This was practically the only time they were scored off. Next, the Navy laid a mine in a likely spot some way out, which proved a nuisance to many of us, for the actual position was a trifle uncertain. In the end a self-sacrificing hare kindly blew it up.

Now, personally, I did not care for this mining business, but had received instructions to carry on. A supply of "Tread" mines, of novel and special design, were sent out, for the enemy always found out the wires connected with the other mines, whether "Observation" or "Trip." Their cuteness throughout was positively uncanny—uncanny to a degree!

Lieutenant Askwith, R.E., an expert in land mines, was sent to me for this work, in addition to railway work, and was specially keen in this contest of wits. A tread-mine, flush with the ground, was always avoided by the enemy and, moreover, the action soon got choked by the sand. It was therefore decided to place them in sandbags, buried 4 inches, and set to detonate under a pressure of 7 lb. Small circular redoubts had been constructed to cover the proposed camping ground of Graham's Force, about 400 yards apart and 400 in advance thereof, but the Expedition having started rather later than was expected, these redoubts were un-

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occupied. The enemy entered them by night, and working most silently, pulled down the revetments, emptied the sandbags, and carried them off.

Askwith would ride out with me about sunset, and would proceed to lay a mine in a redoubt, to discourage the enemy from destroying the parapets, while I would ride some distance beyond to see that no hostile scouts were watching.

On riding out early one morning I found that one of these largest works had been entered and sandbags carried off. On my return I told Askwith to visit and see if his mine had been shifted.

Some time later I heard an explosion and was sick at heart, knowing what it might mean. Thomson came to me and said, "At last, Colonel, we have got some of them." But the reply was to ride out and report. Poor Askwith had evidently been on his knees, scraping to find the mine, for only his legs from knee to foot were found together untouched.

Now I had suggested a systematic plan of placing the mines so that when necessary they could be easily located and removed.

Askwith's detailed report of actual positions was to be given that very day, but of course his notebook was destroyed.

As the little redoubts were now to be occupied, it was necessary to remove the mines. Thomson rode out with me to hold the horses at a distance while I was at work. Believing that my suggested position would be adopted by Askwith, I started at the entrance of a redoubt, on my knees, scraping carefully with my hands to a depth of about 6 inches, straight to the centre—then at right-angles till within a yard of the parapet—the spot suggested.

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Rising to ease my back, I called out to Thomson that the mine was not where I had hoped it would be. Then without having moved a foot I went down again, and was very slowly and gently getting my weight on the hand placed where the ground had been already scraped, when I heard a creak! There was the mine—and I thanked God for His goodness. The mines could be easily lifted as they only contained 7 lb. of explosive. In only a few works had mines been laid, and their removal was accomplished without accident.

I "sold" the enemy later when we were encamped in an exposed position. They came into a hollow at night and fired on us, so I had a large barrel placed there filled with stones, ashes, bits of iron and a very little coarse gunpowder strewn on top—absolutely harmless! But that was beyond them and they never used that spot of vantage again.

By the end of February the preparations for a large force were complete, including great concrete tanks, and a sixth ship pier on the north end of the harbour, the head of the pier being formed of an old ship.

The Ordnance Store Depôt was stationed here, and the Watering Depôt with camel transport, while from the end of the pier an 18-inch railway ran straight to join the little line, running from Quarantine Island towards Handoub. When the contractors for the permanent line got to work, they found our permanent way and culverts sufficient for the heavier line, as far as we had gone, for we had learnt how one storm might change the dry, arid surface of the plain.

A man-of-war trained her searchlight and 6-inch gun along the straight length of railway from this

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pier, covering the exposed front of the above-mentioned Depôts.

Early in March the main body of the Force arrived. In the absence of General Graham, who had been detained sick, in Egypt, for a few days, we remained inactive and, indeed, were less enterprising than the original small force had been.

The little circular redoubts covering the extensive camps had been prepared with an idea that double sentries would patrol between, but this was not done. Then the ancient system of sentries calling out at intervals, "No. 1, All's well," and so on from flank to flank, advised the enemy of the exact position of every sentry. The natural result was that Dervishes crept into camps every night, and speared two or three men, and there was considerable firing and disturbance.

In my camp absolute silence was observed, the sentries being told not to take up the call.

The order was then given to the various camps to fall back, concentrated nearer the town, on to ground previously rejected as being less sanitary.

With the permission of my C.R.E. (later, General Sir Bevan Edwards), I went to the Chief of the Staff, Sir George Greaves, and asked that my company might remain where it was. He at first said such a thing was absolutely impossible. When, however, he recognized the valuable protection we should give to the Water depôt, which otherwise must also be moved, he consented, having been assured that the 17th Co. R.E. was absolutely reliable, and that there would be no trouble, short of our being wiped out, which was unthinkable. Indeed, the enemy from long acquaintance and report of us held us in considerable respect.

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A regiment was taken from our right and another from our left, and all the covering works were deserted.

On the front of our camp, along the little railway, we had put up a plank fence 4½ feet high, flanked by the old timber guardhouse with its fixed rifle battery from Quarantine Island; the carts formed the rear face, close together; and the tents at close order formed the sides. We were too busy to entrench. An officer's guard was nightly posted near the centre of the camp. Daily, about sundown, an officer with nearly half the company was sent out to garrison three of the little works in front; but when it was quite dark they returned to camp (as they could not be spared), leaving a few helmets on the parapets. Then before dawn a similar party went and reoccupied the works, and again as soon as it was light withdrew the helmets.

We were never molested; though there was still trouble in the camps behind, with firing.

Another Subaltern, Layard, had joined us; but they all three said they dared not relate this experience as they would not be believed.

One night we heard cries from the Ordnance depôt, and stood to arms, but could do nothing, for it was distant three-quarters of a mile and it was very dark.

The Sergeant's guard of nineteen men on the depôt had pitched their long Lascar tent alongside the railway, but outside the wagon laager, instead of within it. The arms were piled outside the tent under a sentry. On this particular night the Navy had let the searchlight go out.

So the wide-awake enemy killed the sentry and entered the tent. Though this particular regiment made some bad mistakes, they were grand fighters!

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They fought fiercely with their fists and a few men managed to reach their rifles, on which the bayonets were fixed. The hostile leader, a huge Black, was actually found bayoneted right through the body, part of the rifle muzzle having also entered; but the gallant soldier had been killed with the spear.

The searchlight played up again, the Navy sent a strong party ashore, and things soon settled down again; but the poor guard was nearly wiped out.

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CHAPTER XII

EASTERN SOUDAN CAMPAIGN—1885

General Graham having arrived, there was a reconnaissance in force to Hasheen on March 18, with fighting, and on the following day we occupied that place, where half my company remained for some days.

On the 21st, when I returned to my camp at sunset, I found an order awaiting me to lead the Force straight on Tamaai. I was to start in the dark, at 3 a.m. next day, from a point 3 miles from my camp, on the far side of Suakin. I rushed for my compass, for there was, fortunately, just light enough to take a bearing on a little black spot in the distance, above the bush, which was the top of a hill near Tamaai. This bearing had of course to be corrected for to-morrow's starting-point.

I was greatly surprised at this order on Tamaai. I had certainly recommended this line, because from a half-way zeriba we would be able to threaten equally Tamaai and Tamineb. If the open coast route were taken as before, we should have to return all the way to Suakin in order to make a fresh advance on Tamineb. It was now quite uncertain whether the enemy would stand at Tamaai, or at Tamineb. The direct line would necessarily take us through bad bush, and I had most strongly and consistently urged the cutting of a wide track, by a fighting force, before any convoy went out, and that the zeriba

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for such convoy should be prepared before it went out.

Two schemes had been proposed by me: a clear course, 100 yards wide, with the thorn bush dragged to each side; and a similar clearing, but the bush to be drawn from the centre and sides to leave a track of only 50 yards, but with a clear space outside the hedges. At suitable intervals the thorn hedge to be thrown out into semi-circular flanking-places.

That night I told my Subalterns that the only important action would be fought early the next afternoon, for I believed the report of our native spies that the attack would be made while we were engaged making a zeriba.

On the march next morning as day dawned, I caught glimpses from time to time of camel-men riding parallel to us at a distance, and I informed the Staff that our movements were fully watched. General Graham having returned to Suakin, and the bush proving most trying to the large camel convoy, Generals McNeil and Hudson came to me and said that it was impossible under the circumstances to get out the 8 miles proposed, especially as the Indian Brigade under Hudson had to return to Suakin that day after helping to make the zeriba. I fully agreed, saying I thought we might struggle out some 5 miles, so they left it to me to decide on the spot to halt.

We passed slowly through a belt of thick bush on to an open glade about 250 yards wide: an ideal spot for site-ing the camp, with ample material at hand for the zeriba. The glade ran diagonally from the side of the coast on our left, towards Tamineb on our right front, from which direction I expected the attack.

Having laid out the camp according to the sketch

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shown, the execution was entrusted to Colonel Leach, R.E., V.C. (the late Lieut.-General Sir Edward), commanding the 24th Field Company, who would remain, while I had to return with the Indian Brigade.

Having laid the camp out, and ridden round to see the parties at work, it was a blow to find on my return that the Transport, instead of unloading the mass of supplies, water and ammunition on the site of the central zeriba as arranged, had dumped it all down outside.

I went to Leach, who was carrying on the actual work, and said we must lay out the zeriba afresh to enclose the stores. The large central square was for non-combatants, animals, supplies and water. Each of the smaller flanking squares was for a battalion, while at the salient angle of the latter was a circular revetted post, completing the flanking defence on every side.

On my applying to General Hudson for a covering party to protect the workers on the Tamineb side, he said that in such bush it was hardly a feasible military proposition, but he formed up part of his force in the open glade, behind which the working parties should retreat in case of attack.

The work proceeded apace:—The circular post "A," to which I attached great importance, had been completed, revetted to a height of 4½ feet with excellent thick mimosa thorn hedge outside, and rendered practically secure. Just at the dinner hour I again rode all round and found that the Naval Detachment had been put into this post, and had pulled down the front of the sandbag revetment and bushes to allow their little Gatlings (which seemed generally to jam in emergencies) to fire at a level of about 2 feet. It was, alas, to late to alter, but the

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officer was strenuously urged to spread a broad belt of bush—though necessarily very low—well laced together with barbed wire, for I expected an early attack.

Nothing, however, was done, for the men were at dinner. This was about 1 p.m. and I had to leave in half an hour; so as my horse had been busy since about 2 a.m., I tied him up on the Suakin side of the zeriba, put the feed-bag on, and went for a last word with Leach. The position, then, was as follows:—Leach's Sappers, with their arms, cutting bush in rear; the Royal Marines also cutting there; the Madras Sappers, a splendid old force, with their arms, and three officers were cutting in front; while the Berkshire Regiment, without arms, were also cutting there; a handful of Lancers, as scouts, were in the bush; a Madras Battalion in the glade on the left front were ready to march back; the Camel Convoy were in the glade on their left; and the Sikhs and Bombay Native Infantry formed up on the right of the camp, ready to march back.

Before reaching Leach, I heard the war-cry, loud and shrill. Knowing that we should be in the middle of the storm in three or four minutes, it was a question whether it were best to get to my horse and put on the bridle and regirth him. As one would be more useful, probably, on the horse, that was the course pursued. He carried me over the not-quite-finished rear face of the zeriba. It was clear that we were in for a lively rough-and-tumble.

The enemy came in on the heels of the Scouts; the Madras Sappers fell back fighting; the Berkshires ran back for their arms through their rear opening "O" into their zeriba; while the Dervishes poured through the gap at "A," wiping out

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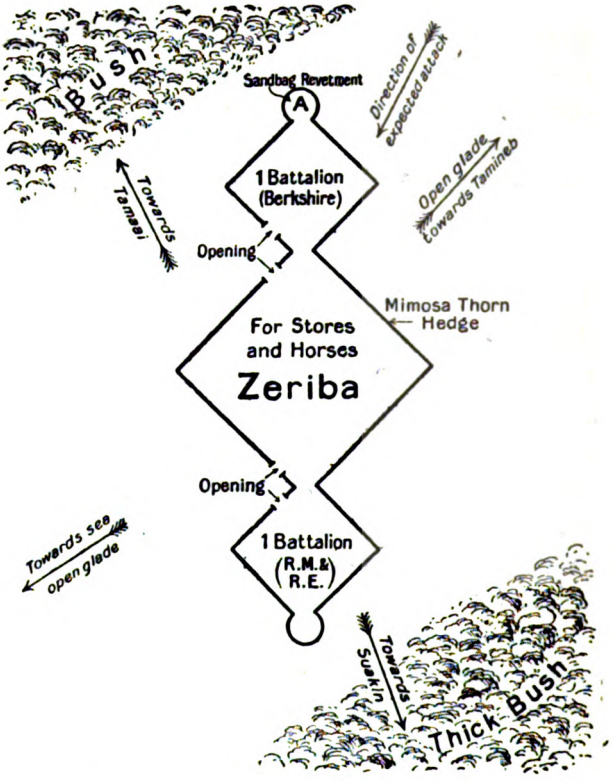
the Naval Detachment, who as usual stuck gallantly to their poor little Gatlings. The Madras Battalion, seeing the white troops fleeing, as they supposed, failed to stand, and some of the enemy came through the unfinished central square from our left into the rear square.



I prayed to God that the Camel Convoy would have sense to hasten, while they might, down the glade towards the coast; but with customary fatalism they awaited whatever might come upon them.

In about ten minutes after hearing the war-cry one knew the camp was safe, for the firing from the Indian troops on the right was absolutely steady.

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The front square was cleared by the Berkshires, who had got to their piled arms just in time to ram in a cartridge and fire at the closest possible quarters. I counted 150 dead Dervishes in this small space, many with their *jibbas* partly burnt. There were sundry dramatic scenes in the rear square and my revolver had to be used.

Then with extraordinary rapidity a new phase developed. The enemy, having killed most of our native drivers, drove a crowd of camels, as a screen, to cover their attack on the Sappers and Marines in the rear. These had rallied together in a big group; and as these fresh spearmen and swordsmen approached under this novel cover, I was thinking how that situation could be best met, when the whole body rose together like a great flock of starlings, ran back 100 yards nearer the zeriba and then pitched all down together again—very neatly done!

In a few more minutes the enemy was fairly and completely beaten. I then went to the General and urged that a battalion be sent all round our position to demonstrate the completeness of the victory instead of confining the troops to the zeriba as was ordered. I pointed out that the Dervishes, who came on to kill or die, were wiped out; that the rest were of no account; that they would be engaged in getting off their wounded, that they must get back for water, and that not another shot would be fired that night on us. But the Staff, fresh to this novel experience, would not believe me, neither would they allow the zeriba to be moved along the glade, which I urged, as I well knew what the stench of the mass of camels would be. They eventually had to be burned with paraffin, mostly where they lay.

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On getting back to Suakin, General Fremantle, the Governor, told me that correspondents came running back, reporting a terrible disaster, evidently anxious to be the first to get their dire news home. He then met an R.E. Driver riding, and leading his pair of horses, who reported that he knew the Force was all right, that the enemy had cut him off from his Unit; and that the last thing he heard was steady volleys.

Now hear the Arab account of this so-called "McNeil's Disaster":—"The women went that night to Osman Digna and said, 'Where are our husbands, where are our brothers? You promised us this time that you would drive the English into the sea! We will go into the mountains, and if the English follow us there, Allah's will be done!' And Osman Digna covered his face with his hands and answered not a word."

In those days many correspondents seemed to think that we ought to inflict fearful losses on our foes—however gallant fighters they might be—and yet suffer hardly any loss ourselves. Both of the Subalterns of the Madras Sappers were killed by horizontal sword-cuts right across the forehead from ear to ear, only a thin pink line indicating the tremendous cut of the thin broad double-edged sword. Their Captain, with a slashed thigh roughly bound up, remained on his horse doing a brave man's work while his men remained steady after their most trying ordeal.

On the 24th, bush-cutting from the zeriba was commenced towards Tamaai, but it was not till the 28th that I obtained permission to start cutting the track from Suakin to this zeriba, with my company and the reliable Madras Sappers, covered by two

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companies of the Guards. The enemy confined his attacks to convoys where the track had not been cut. On April 1 a track over 100 yards wide was cut towards Handoub by 340 men for a length of 3 miles. In all cases the Sappers worked in sections of fours, equipped with axe, saw, billhook and rope, each section piling arms close to its work, to be ready in case of attack instead of having to run back unarmed to a central spot.

On the 2nd a zeriba was formed close to Tamaai, whence the enemy retired next day, firing wildly. Having to report to General Graham on the water supply, I found it was now 3½ feet below the surface instead of flowing over it as in 1884. We therefore returned to "McNeil's Zeriba," where ample water had been stored. The direct distance from Tamaai to Suakin was about 15 miles.

Learning that Osman Digna had fled, and that there was no gathering at Tamineb, for the Tofrek Action had been practically decisive, we returned to Suakin and devoted our attention to Handoub, some 13 miles on the road to Berber. By the 11th, that place had been well entrenched, the track completed, an intermediate post with blockhouse formed, and the water supply greatly developed. The water was running in the khor just below the surface, so wide trenches were cut across it for watering all the animals.

On the 13th we commenced cutting the track to Otao.

On the 15th our Friendlies (in red jackets to distinguish them) made a raid on Hasheen and brought back prisoners and 800 sheep and goats, for no Dervishes remained in the district.

On the 16th I accompanied General Stewart (the

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late Sir Herbert) with a Force of 1 battalion, 2 guns, 17th Co. R.E. and some Cavalry, which marched the 8 miles to Otao with four days' supplies, and zeriba-ed, the Cavalry returning to Handoub. Here we formed redoubts on the hills and developed the water supply, water being abundant in the khor, 4½ feet below ground.

April 19, Tambuk, 4 miles farther, was occupied, Thomson with thirty Sappers being left at Otao.

Our garrison consisted of the 2nd Scots Guards under Colonel Trefusis, Commanding at Tambuk, and the rest of my company. We zeriba-ed in the plain with a strong post on either side on a rocky hill. To improve the scanty water supply, holes were drilled in the rocky bottoms of the wells, which were deepened by charges of dynamite. The troops sheltered themselves under booths of brushwood. I shot hares, partridges, and sandgrouse of more than one species; and one day Heath and I each shot two gazelles with the service carbine.

A warning was received from Head-quarters against this sort of business, as there was information that the enemy intended to cut off such sportsmen. Trefusis, however, agreed with me that this confident bearing had a good general moral effect, and prevented the men from thinking that we were in a state of siege.

One of my Arabs was unusually fast, and so absolutely handy that I could load the gun, when galloping through fairly open bush. The least touch on his neck, or pressure of the knee, would make him take the desired side of a bush. Then, as I only dismounted to pick up anything shot, it was felt that he could carry me out of any ordinary trouble.

In my solitary roamings I came upon a remark-

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able copper-bearing quartz reef, standing up in parts 20 feet high and 12 feet thick, running for 2 or 3 miles along the foothills, with smaller reefs running parallel to it. Head-quarters allowed an Australian expert, Parrott of the New South Wales Contingent (later Colonel, in the Boer War), to come up to me from Suakin, and we prospected with a party of Sappers. He considered it a remarkable and valuable outcrop, for besides native copper there was "Peacock" ore.

I applied for a small concession of 100 acres, considering that if the reefs were worked it would tend to settle the country, but it was not granted till twelve years later when I was serving in Malta.

In the meanwhile a small syndicate had been formed, and two or three of them then went out in a yacht, and after great difficulty managed to visit the reefs, which were precisely as shown on my watercolour sketches, which they took with them.

They brought back samples which were assayed and confirmed my statements, but the difficulties of labour, transport, and general conditions, combined with sad lack of funds, caused our concession to be terminated.

Had the railway to Berber run from Suakin, as originally intended, instead of from the better harbour of Port Soudan, this industry would have been started, and some day it doubtless will be.

On the 24th and 30th, mounted troops having come out for the purpose, we reconnoitred 10 miles towards Essibil on the way to Berber, being fired on for one or two nights for a short time. On May 6, Mounted Infantry, Camel Corps and Sikhs made an early-morning raid from Otao on the enemy near

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us, inflicting considerable casualties and taking 500 goats.

One evening Layard surprised us by saying he had seen a family of wolves about three-quarters of a mile from camp, so next evening I rode out and put up a wolf (*C. Simensis*) and two half-grown cubs. The parent was soon lost to sight, but I rode the cubs till they were close under me, when I had not the heart to shoot the poor little beggars.

On May 12, Lord Wolseley inspected, and I rode back with him as far as Otao, discussing the local situation.

A few days before, a sort of truce was called with the local tribe, and I was riding back alone from Handoub, on the evening after it was supposed to be started, when there appeared in the track in front of me a body of armed natives. Being a firm believer in showing trustfulness to natives, I rode straight on through them, exchanging a salutation.

That same morning Thomson with a party of Sappers went out from Otao to work at a well some miles off, and was somewhat startled to see a body of armed natives there, but no trouble resulted. In three or four days we were fighting again, but in a feeble way, and active hostilities soon ceased.

On May 13 I rode in to Suakin and back, and on the following day my company received orders for Suakin.

On the 15th we marched to Otao and thence trained to Suakin. Here, as our departure was postponed, we re-occupied our old camping ground.

On our return a crowd of our old natives came round my horse, delighted to welcome me, but, on seeing Thomson, they at once left me, as quite a minor star, and hung about him like bees. He had

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been their immediate boss on the works and always scrupulously just. He had not refrained, now and again, from rapping their shins with his little cane, whereupon they would ask him to rap them on the head instead, but withal they had a touching regard for him, and also a pet name.

One afternoon a heavy storm lowered the temperature suddenly from 100° to 77°, and four of us felt so bucked up that we started a game of lawn tennis on the desert close at hand, but unanimously gave it up when only half through the first set. We all went straight down with fever. I, as usual, threw it off in thirty-six hours; Layard was invalided home; Marsh, Surgeon R.N., had it badly; while Wilson, R.M.A., pulled round fairly soon. It was the old Malta story—get a chill, and the fever germ had its chance and took it.

On June 4 we embarked on s.s. *Erin*, I being in command of troops, about 880 with 50 horses. Sir George Greaves, C. of S., was also on board, with whom I had interesting talks.

One of the things which had struck me during my time at Suakin was the endurance of Arab horses without water, while doing hard work. I can only speak personally for forty-eight hours, but others at Suakin mention sixty; and, yet again, on the Nile Campaign, seventy hours! English horses were watered when Arabs were not. When I had an English horse in 1884, I used to give him the benefit of my water-bottle, merely gargling, and then blowing the water on to his fodder or up his nostrils; and, even so, at one puddle in a khor I estimated that he drank fully 10 gallons and left none for me. In South Africa I had trained myself in this way to do with very little water and suffered little from

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thirst. The poor men had no self-restraint, and would empty their bottles at the start when they knew there was no more for hours.

On June 11 we arrived off Ismailia and remained blocked in Lake Timsah, a dredge having sunk in the canal ahead. Now the French Canal Authorities used to boast that they could clear away any obstruction in three or four days. But time went on; sickness broke out on board, so that poor fellows had to be sent back to the Suez hospital; and horses died, though we got them on deck for a little change and sent some ashore.

One day I got out my canoe, and when under full sail a sudden squall struck her from a different quarter, and as the sheet for the second time in my life was held on too long, over she went! The sails were got off first, when I righted her, stowed the gear below and swam with her to a low sandbank island, turned her over, and, starting again, carried on till we were fairly dry.

After thirteen days' delay we were allowed to start. The wreck had been blown up, but the various sections had not been lifted. They were merely buoyed, while the canal bank had been cut away to admit of vessels struggling round—a miserable business!

The first ship to pass through from the other side struck the wreck, tore a great hole in her bottom, and took the ground, leaving room, however, for us to approach, we being the first from our side. We went very slowly, and every one saw that we should not clear the first buoy. The French pilot signalled, "Stop her,"—a hopeless order! The Captain shoved the pilot aside, signalled, "Full speed ahead," took command and got the big

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Atlantic steamer safely through. When I warmly praised his wonderful nerve and decision he replied that I did not know all: for the ship was not insured, and he had taken that crushing responsibility upon himself. Of such are our magnificent Merchant Captains!

On the 28th we were at Malta, where I visited my old Chief, Sir Lintorn Simmons, the Governor, and at 7 p.m., July 7, we detrained at Chatham, whose streets were crowded to greet us, and to escort us to Brompton Barracks. A cheery home-coming!

In the years to come General Sir Lyon Fremantle always spoke and wrote of "The dear old 17th Company," and, indeed, the men had proved themselves absolutely reliable in every varied circumstance. It was gratifying to receive from the War Office the following:—". . . in consideration of the exceptionally good service rendered by you during both the Expeditions to Suakin and also during the occupation in Egypt, the Field-Marshal C. and C. approves of your name being noted as qualified for Staff employment." This rendered it unnecessary to go through the Staff College. I also was granted the C.B.

Each of the Subalterns of the company, Heath and Thomson, received Brevet majority, on the day of being promoted Regimental Captain, for their fine service in the three foregoing campaigns.

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CHAPTER XIII

AT ALDERSHOT, THE CURRAGH, AND THE WAR OFFICE—1885–94

After a short stay at Chatham, I went on leave to Ledbury, and while there planned a canoe trip in Scotland with my brothers Miles and C.K. The start was to have been made on the day following a lawn-tennis tournament. My father had cautioned me against drowning my brothers, so I remarked that there was some risk in every sport or game, and that one of us might break an ankle or leg that very afternoon at the tournament. Unfortunately my remark came true.

Miles, in running back to take a ball that had passed his partner, struck his foot against a bank, sustaining front dislocation and fracture of the ankle. However, he took it very composedly.

C.K. and I started on the Clyde and ended at Rothes on the Spey, after many excitements. At the bottom of Loch Awe, where the river Awe leaves it, some salmon-fishers shouted at us to stop, saying that the river was impracticable. When I said we meant to try, they replied rather impatiently, "Will you not land and see for yourselves that it is impossible?" As I could tell by the ear that there was no fall to begin with, we promptly entered on the steep slope of broken water. One soon realized that it would not do for C.K.'s oak-built *Rob Roy*, so, by the aid of a back eddy, he got ashore, and,

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with one of the gillies, ran down the bank for 3 or 4 miles, to see the *Zephyr* thread the rocks almost to Loch Etive. Apparently this was the only time a boat had been known to go down the river.

A cart carried our canoes up again to Loch Awe, where we were invited to join the picnic party of fishers and their friends at tea.

The *Zephyr* safely negotiated an awkward bit at Grantully bridge on the Tay, where are the so-called "Falls"; and finally we entrained at Perth for Kingussie on the Spey.

Mr. John Bright, who was in our compartment, was very chatty. So interested was he in the canoes, that we had to give the hour when we expected to be at Grantown on the second day, as he wished to see us do the rapids.

On referring to C.K.'s record of the trip, after leaving Boat-a-Garten, he writes:—"Very rapid stream, grand scenery, and difficult rapids. On several occasions salmon-fishers shouted to us not to go on, and then, dropping their rods, ran to see us shoot the rapids.

"There was one very long one with big curling waves all the way down, and in my *Rob Roy* it was impossible for me not to bury myself as we dashed on, and so at the foot she was half full of water."

Though we were an hour late at Grantown, we found John Bright and a party waiting for us, so we landed for a talk, going on again afterwards, covering 44 miles that day.

From Rothies I trained to Morvich, adjoining Dunrobin, for grouse shooting with my old friend Major Weston, who asked me up several seasons. One day the following different sorts of game fell

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to my gun: Blackgame, grouse, woodcock, wild duck, teal, snipe, brown hare, and blue hare. This was equalled once on an uncle's shoot in Pembrokeshire when I bagged eight different sorts, including golden plover, but excluding pigeon.

In 1886 the 17th Company found itself at Aldershot, having been promoted to be a Field Company, with double its former personnel. Here I had a "Division" for works, retaining command of the company and enjoying the life of our chief training centre.

In the summer I was lent as C.R.E. for the camp of the National Rifle Association at Wimbledon, the precursor of Bisley.

In the beginning of 1888 my company was moved to the Curragh, the training centre in Ireland, a charming station, and here I acted for some time as C.R.E., Colonel Bond being *hors de combat*. He had been riding in a point-to-point race, when in charging a bullfinch a thorn went into his eye, which blinded him permanently but did not prevent his finishing third!

The Kildare hounds gave first-rate sport. I had then two horses, one of them being a thoroughbred which I had bought in Herefordshire, and which I called Merriman, from his sunny disposition. One great run dwells in my memory—we had been going far and fast, when the huntsman and another pulled up short at some formidable obstacle. As we galloped up I shouted, "Is it practicable?" the reply being, "You can try it if you like." We flew a big wide yawning "drain" which in cold blood one could not have faced. I then thought to be alone with hounds, when I saw the light-weight Kennedy racing for the only practicable place into a road.

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He crossed just in front of me, rushing his horse at the opposite fence, in which he stuck fast and firm.

Now as boys my brothers and I had much enjoyed that account in the life of that famous M.F.H. Assheton Smith, where he stuck in a bullfinch and called to his friend following him, "Charge me, Jack, charge me!" And Jack charged, sending horse and man flying into the next field.

Remembering this, I shouted, "Shall I charge you, Kennedy?" but, knowing the sportsman he was, never waited for his consent and forthwith charged his horse into the field from under his rider, who, while falling in the air, called out cheerily, "Quite right, Wood, quite right." Then, as Merriman had been drawn back for his next effort, Bob R. on a big horse tried feebly to get through the fence, which was on a bank, and, though open below, yet the boughs met very strongly above. "Come back out of that, for you can," said I. "Oh," was the reply, "we're done: we have just taken a desperate toss and all the strength is knocked out of us." Then my horse made his rush and got through, but both my arms were forced right back behind me and it must have been then that my gold watch was torn out of the wrist-case and lost.

Soon afterwards I saw Kennedy jump on to a bank and turn along the top before disappearing. I was prepared to do likewise. The bank was of unusual width, and below it was the great yawning Main Drain of Kildare with a low weak rail on the take-off side, which ended a few yards to the left, where K. had taken off. His horse landed on the far bank with a scramble. Merriman, seeing the hounds in front, turned sharp for the rail. Knowing

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him to be very clever and strong in the back, I thought he might find himself somehow safe in the almost dry bottom and creep up somewhere else, but, tearing away the weak rail, he punted himself firm and strong on to the far side.

We two soon saw the finish, when Kennedy said to me, "The blood-thirstiest thing ever done! I thought no horse in the world could get over it!" —and this was said by the hardest man in Kildare.

As every one knows, the love of hunting is in the Irishman's blood. Numbers run a-foot to see all they can and at the same time to pick up a trifle for helping anyone who is in need. Yet in one night the whole countryside was turned against the Hunt by agitators from Dublin. The next morning, when I was riding in to Naas to the Meet, I saw a crowd of men and women who raised yells like savages at the men in pink. Poison was laid for the hounds, so they were muzzled going out and coming home for a distance of eight miles from kennels. We ourselves were warned off land with pitchforks.

In about a fortnight the opposition died out, and one evening, when riding home alone from a distant meet, I was accosted by a wayfarer. "Any sport, your Anner?"—"Yes, very good." Then in a stage whisper, "Was there anny previntin?"—"No, the boys were very good."—"God be praised, yer Anner: I should like to drink yer Anner's hilth." And this is the usual conclusion of the matter. A queer people entirely!

The horseflies in parts were terrible. I was once driving my brother Miles over the Wicklow hills to Glendalough, when we could see the blood appearing all over the horse, which was fortunately a placid

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"Bât" horse. We got down and killed 150 bloated flies on him at one time. On speaking of it to the ostler he said, "Yer may well say that, yer Anner—Flies!—I had a little harse up in the hills and they ate her up—cut her to rags!"

Important manœuvres were to be held at the Curragh, but owing to drought the water supply would be quite unequal to the proposed concentration. A new, deep and large well was therefore decided upon. All efforts, however, to induce firms to undertake this work failed, for they said that running sand was sure to be met, and that in any case the time was too short. It remained for the Sappers to see what they could do on a plan of my own.

Cast-iron drums, 6 feet in diameter, were ordered, and these were to be bolted together to a total length of 20 feet. We borrowed ample chains, pulleys, etc., from the Navy at Haulbowline. Starting with the ordinary brick lining, as soon as the running sand was encountered, the drums were bolted together and slung from a stout overhead staging, and so descending as the well was deepened. Boulders and stones rattled down behind this casing while the men worked in safety. At 60 feet water was met, when the well was deepened till a grand supply was secured, and all was done within the month.

In connection with this work I had an awkward experience. As the C.O. of a Field Company had the privilege of taking a "Bât" horse from its Transport for service use, I had taken a very good-looking mare into my stable, chiefly for the use of my Subalterns. Riding her one day as usual to visit the well, she took the bit in her teeth, on jumping a little ditch, and ran away. This would hardly

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matter on the Curragh, but she kept boring for the well, and though I twisted her head away from it almost to my knee, yet she carried on a great curve that must inevitably end in the well. When within 30 yards of it, I straightened her head for it, the Sappers loosed off a chain to the overhead staging which must have caught me, and we shot through a little gap between the well and a pile of bricks and iron. Just beyond was a sharp rise, so I loosed the rains, drove in the spurs, and at the top pulled her up short.

Two days later she ran away with Layard, all the way from Newbridge to Curragh, and dashed into her stable. Providentially the doors were high, and the rider threw himself back on the crupper. Forthwith, she was sent back to the ranks, kept low, worked hard, and proved useful enough.

In 1889 Major-General Sir Robert Grant, D.A.G.R.E., at the War Office, took me as his A.A.G., so a regretful "Good-bye" had to be said to the old company which I had commanded in peace and war for nine years; and surely no one could have had the privilege of serving with a better or more loyal body of officers, N.C.O.'s and men. The affection of the old Subalterns for the company was well shown by Bt.-Major Graham Thomson, when it went into camp for its Annual Fieldwork training in 1887. He was then on the Survey, and spent his leave in camp with us, doing the duties of a Subaltern, much to my assistance, as we happened to be an officer short.

During my five years at the War Office I had a comfortable flat in Morpeth Terrace; and was able to be of a little help to my Vicar, the Hon. Stafford Northcote, by teaching in the Sunday school as I

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had done elsewhere. I was also on the Committee for evening classes.

My walks to the W.O. through beautiful St. James's Park gave me many an interesting scene in bird life. Two broods of ducklings were toddling along a path when the mother duck in the van made a sudden and unprovoked attack on one of the other's children which had got mixed with hers at the front. The other duck, realizing that she was too far in the rear to give immediate assistance, instantly adopted the most effective form of tactics. She dashed at the nearest offspring of the enemy, which at once brought her off to the rescue. What General could have done better?

On another occasion I saw a little fluff-ball come to the surface, scuttle along the water a bit and then dive. Immediately afterwards a snaky-headed cormorant emerged, closely followed by a golden-eyed duck. The cormorant dived in pursuit of the fluff-ball, but the duck did not. She sat keenly alert, and when her little chick appeared, only just in front of the cormorant, she dashed at the latter's head. The enemy then sailed away, evidently saying, "I don't want your miserable little brat!"

By working longish hours I was able to hunt once a fortnight, occasionally with the Queen's, but generally with Baron Rothschild's Staghounds, in the famous Vale of Aylesbury, with its very high wattles and its water-jumps.

This meant 3 miles from stables to station, 42 miles to Leighton Buzzard, and anything up to 10 or 12 miles to the Meet, yet in five seasons we only once failed to see the day out. My man would give Merriman a feed and return by a slow train, but even then the horse was too lively in the lighted

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London streets, for it was impossible to tire him.

We kept ourselves fit by gallops before breakfast round deserted Battersea Park. The start was usually rather interesting. My street in those days was blocked at the far end, and Merriman would be prancing gaily some 60 yards or more away, when I would call out, "Let him go." He would then come lunging proudly up and stop like a beautiful statue at my steps. This sight used to draw people to their windows, some even jumping out of bed to see him. He was too lively to be every one's mount, and twice on greasy wood pavements his gay doings brought him smack down on his side, for he had no nerves. At Aldershot and the Curragh he raised many a laugh at pow-wows by suddenly bucking off my headgear. On passing the saluting post he considered that he must mark the importance of the ceremony. Coming up with a stately tread (pointing his toes like a dancing master) he would always give one fine bound as the sword came down to the salute, and then stride sedately on.

To get me off was the last thing in his mind. Once when Colonel Bond and I, representing the Kildare Hunt, were with the Carlow Hounds (under that grand old M.F.H. Watson, on his 17-hand bank-jumper), he saw the hounds, streaming sharp to his right, as he came over a fence. He propped on landing and turned sharp to follow them, shooting me almost off. But he stopped of his own accord to let me regain the saddle. Bond said that if we had parted company he never would have forgiven me.

Once, near Malvern, the greasy ground was scooped out wide on the far side of a hog-backed stile and he slipped up on landing. When he rose, I lay close to his heels with my foot fast in the stirrup.

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All efforts to free it proved fruitless, but while struggling I talked to him. No one was near, and it was an uncomfortable time before anyone could come to the rescue.

When the D.A.G.R.E. was on leave I had to accompany H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge on Inspections at Chatham and Aldershot. Also when his portrait was being painted for the R.E. I attended him from Gloucester House. While driving in the brougham he said, "Now I want you to observe particularly: he has given me too much stomach: I know I am stout, but I haven't got a stomach." I was able to suggest to the artist that the high light might well be softened in that region, and he concurred.

H.R.H. was essentially just and kindly, and we all felt how near to his heart was the efficiency and well-being of the Army.

I built another *Zephyr* in my flat. To admit of getting her easily downstairs out of the house, she was made in two sections, the after one forming a watertight compartment with commodious deck hatch. She was launched by Lady Simmons from the dining-room table to the floor, but no bottle of champagne was broken on the bow.

In August 1893, C.K. in the old *Zephyr* and I in the new went for another trip in Scotland.

[1] When we arrived at Inverness, we wheeled the canoes on to the Caledonian Canal at the head of the first series of locks, and paddled away gaily in bright sunshiny weather.

On Loch Ness we sailed idly, under light airs, and noted with pleasure, then as later, that our sailing powers were nearly equal, though the latest *Zephyr* had a slight advantage.

[1] Extract from the *Royal Engineers Journal*, October 1893.

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After landing at the ruins of Castle Urquhart, it came on to blow very strong from dead ahead, so we had to stow sails and take to the paddle. It proved a hard tussle against stiff squalls and choppy seas, for the next 5 miles, to Foyers' pier. Then we had to toil up the hill with our traps to the hotel, and were quite ready for supper after our 21 miles.

Next morning we visited the famous falls, which formed fine and beautiful pictures, far exceeding our anticipations. Soon after noon we were sailing and paddling for Fort Augustus, where a portage had to be made over the series of five locks. Here, as elsewhere, our little carriages proved most useful, for the total weight of stores and gear was heavy, though the carriage only weighs 5 lb.

Launched once more on the canal, in the presence of an interested crowd, we found a strong head wind. We lashed the canoes together and ran a tow-line through a ring 5 feet up the mast. At the other end of this line the strong-legged C.K. had to act as horse, while the serious responsibility of steering devolved on the veteran. The fleet tore through the water at nearly 5 miles an hour, and the steersman's constant attention was requisite to keep it close to the shore and parallel with it, for if we sheered out ever so little the horse would look round with mild reproach, protesting against the extra strain.

Two more portages over locks, and Loch Oich was entered, where a paddle of 2 miles brought us to an old boathouse, whence it was a mile up the Garry to a comfortable hotel. Distance covered, 17 miles.

Next morning we sailed up charming little Loch Oich, carrying on in fine style to the bridge, which

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the bridge-keepers hastened to throw open for us to sail through. We went on slowly along the canal between the wooded banks, which shut out most of the wind.

Before entering Loch Lochy, our sailing keels and baggage were despatched by steamer to Fort William. Then with the wind aft we sailed down to the river Lochy, landing for lunch at a charming spot. Here we hauled over by the side of the salmon-pass under the bridge, on to the fast-flowing river, rejoicing in the prospect of some nice rapids which C.K., who had previously canoed down the river, had promised us.

Somewhere near Tor Castle the river tumbled through a narrow passage, the main rush of waters forming a big sharp-crested wave through which C.K. had burst on the former occasion, shipping much water in spite of well-cover and apron. Here, contrary to usual practice, we landed to reconnoitre.

Between this very formidable wave and the rock bank was an interval of a few yards, but with an unpleasant rock in the middle just awash. The cross-rush of waters rendered it very difficult to hit the narrow space that was practicable, but my canoe managed just to get through. Poised in an eddy below, I tried to give a better line to the other, but the cross-stream was too heavy, and striking on the sunken rock she swung broadside on it in the torrent. Here the remarkable righting power of these canoes was shown, for, after hanging a minute, she was swept safely off with but little water on board.

There was only one more rapid of importance, at the head of which, the most likely-looking stream proved to tumble on to a rock, just under water, which, owing to the sharp fall, could not be seen till too

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late. The leading canoe, going very fast, hit hard but bounded off. The second, which would have taken a line of its own, misunderstood a hurried signal and followed the first. She struck heavily and stuck fast, whereupon her pilot got out on the rock and she immediately swung clear. Unfortunately, however, though C.K. had hold of the "painter," it was not securely fastened, so away went his craft. After an exciting chase she was caught by No. 1 and piloted into a back eddy, just as both canoes were about to be rushed down a very awkward place.

No. 1 had now to be prepared for the rescue of No. 2's pilot, who was calmly standing in the middle of the river, with waves rushing tumultuously on each side of him.

The well-cover was removed so that a passenger could be admitted more easily, and then, after a hard fight, by working back eddies, she won the tail of the eddy below the sunken rock, and her nose was quietly driven between C.K.'s knees, taking him astride of the bow. As he cautiously, yet nimbly, drew himself into the well, the canoe swung round in full stream, and the next minute we drove heavily on to another rock just submerged. The blow on the bilge, heavily laden as we were, was so severe that an ordinary canoe must have been stove in, as I had seen happen on the Tamar with half the load. My passenger thought we must roll over and was prepared to jettison himself, but this was not necessary.

We were soon safely on our way again, enjoying delightful scenes, and taking many of the rapids sitting on the after-deck with feet in the well. This position permits of a much freer reach for the long

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paddle, admits of better view of sunken rocks ahead, and is a sporting and exciting way of travelling, except against head winds.

Fort William was reached after covering 26 miles.

Next day we sailed down Loch Eil in squally weather, the wind coming first from one quarter and then from another. Suddenly, as we were near the high shore, a furious squall broke on us with a roar over the cliff.

Fortunately we were under close-reefed mainsail only, and at once brailed up. The force of the wind however was so great that it was impossible to turn head to wind and stow the mast, so we were compelled to drive before the wind, and paddle for the opposite rocky shore. It was exciting work! Four or five feet of the canoe would shoot out beyond a sharp-crested wave, which was foaming along either side, and an occasional strong back stroke was needed to keep her straight. Fortunately we were able to make a tiny sheltered cove, where we could stow masts, and soon after started to paddle to Ardgour inn, meeting a strong tide and cross-seas. Here the afternoon was passed in a walk up the hills, and at seven o'clock next morning we were sailing into Loch Linnhe. We could get close up to many birds, cormorants and others, and were glad that no gun was carried to excite any murderous instinct.

On our near approach to one island, about forty seals flopped into the water and reappeared all round us, staring inquisitively at the strange visitors. Then again, a porpoise would sometimes make its appearance startlingly close, so that the day was full of interest.

We landed for lunch beyond Loch Corry, made a

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fire and brewed excellent tea as on other occasions, spending about two hours before starting again in heavy rain. With our good well-covers and aprons and thick white woollen jerseys we cared little for rain, which, being cold, stimulated us to push along. We crept close round the rocky headlands, coming continually close on oyster-catchers and other birds, and often getting a bit of lee where the sea, under wooded cliffs, was of the deepest green. The varied colours of seaweed, rock and foliage gave a series of beautiful pictures, against a mysterious background of mist-covered hills. At last, before entering the Sound of Mull, the bright evening sun shot out under heavy canoplies of cloud, giving a succession of exceptionally fine effects. We paddled down a narrow lane of water between the Ridire Islands, which were peopled by myriads of seagulls, who wheeled and screamed round us as we passed through their city. It was a fairy scene. Then, as the wind now served, we sailed to our little inn on Loch Aline: distance, 30 miles.

Next day we sailed through Loch Sunart into Loch Drumbuy, where we landed for al fresco refreshment, and finally, after a delightful day, put up at the little Salen inn: distance, 28 miles.

Next morning, Sunday, we lay in the canoes in a sunny cove for a quiet read, after which we dived overboard, but it was so cold that we soon came on board again over the stern. We then sailed to the mouth of a nice stream where lunch was served and a fire made for tea. After which, lazily lying at full length, we sailed under a blazing sun to Strontian inn. Here fortunately was ample accommodation, for as often as not on this trip we had to sleep on chairs or sofas.

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On Monday we had a pleasant walk of 9 miles through Glen Tarbet, the canoes being on a farm cart. After dragging them down a rocky stream at Inversanda into Loch Linnhe once more, we bathed, and then sailed away to Loch Leven.

At Ballachulish the tide was rushing fast through the narrows in swirls and eddies, and the effect on each one of us was as if we were rushing down a steep slope into a fairy world, for the atmospheric effects were simply delicious! Let not the hardened man of the world imagine these sensations were due to libations of something more potent than tea. Good Kummel was certainly carried on board, and the excellent liqueur might sometimes of an evening tend to a rosy view of things. In any case we were loth to leave the water at Invercoe and encounter certain stern realities on land. No inn, no cart, no horse—nothing for us but to put the canoes on their carriages, and to engage a couple of sturdy youths to assist in dragging them nearly 3 miles up Glencoe to Clachaig inn. The population was greatly excited and some young fellows fortunately came along to swell the procession, for after 2 miles one carriage broke down, having been unwisely weakened, to save ½ lb. in weight. Willing hands were, however, ready to carry the canoe up the remaining mile.

In spite of the serious difficulty of getting a cart at harvest time, we had the satisfaction of seeing the *Zephyrs* stowed on one early next morning, with the driver perched high aloft on one of the bows.

At the top of this famous pass the more aged Field Officer mounted into his canoe, while the younger footed the 9 miles to King's House inn, whence they proceeded, after a late breakfast, in fine style on a pair-horsed brake. Having reached the top of the

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very high pass on Black Mountain, the descent was made at an astonishing pace—at a hand-gallop most of the way! As we swung round the bends, we felt it was well that the fleet had been most carefully lashed. The accomplished Jehu said the horses did it best that way!

The map had shown Loch Na Baw as extending in a series of lagoons to the road, whereas most reports were to the effect that there was only the little rocky impracticable stream of that name. It was pleasant, therefore, to see, shining below, lagoons and streams that promised well. Alas! how delusive it all proved. In a wet season all might have been well; but in this exceptionally dry one, how different the tale to be told!

From the last hotel we had despatched home the mainmasts, sailing keels, etc., so as to travel light, and now, setting the jib on a little mast and with mizen too, we flew down the first lagoon before half a gale of wind—but how to get out of it, that became the question!

At last a shallow ditch was found, down which the fleet could be piloted, ourselves on shore. Then, getting on board, we stood up and punted with our 9-foot paddles, painfully struggling through reeds and mud, on which we were continually aground. The bottom was too soft for towing, and more than once we had to turn back and try a fresh channel, and yet about 4 inches of water was all that was essential.

At last the point was reached where the mountain stream entered, and here steep rocky shallows connected the pools. But though the canoes could twist in and out of boulders like eels, yet most of the time they were dragged among boulders, holes, and

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tumbling water. Never were precious crafts more recklessly bumped down little rapids or dragged over rocks, for there was no leisure to treat them tenderly.

It is true that a good late luncheon gave us fresh hope and vigour, and that each tiny bit of clear water was fondly imagined to be the beginning of Loch Na Baw—but no—again would the canoes be twisting like corks down a rapid, till the inevitable jam on a rock occurs and out we pop again to lift and drag. Once and again, C.K., having the advantage of less age and more leg-power, would return from the foot of a long rapid to aid me through a last stage of conflict with boulders.

As evening drew on it was far from easy to decide on the best channel, so we scouted ashore in different directions to make sure. Eventually we were in the Loch, having taken hours to cover a ridiculously short distance.

We made at once for an island on which was abundance of dead wood, so that very shortly a fire was blazing, culinary operations started and the canoes dragged up side by side to a sheltered spot.

A thunderstorm was growling round Black Mountain, and supper was barely ended when it broke on us. Hastily piling logs on the fire, we flew into the canoes and made covers secure. C.K.'s head was under an umbrella, while mine lay under a waterproof sheet stretched over the paddle, which was lashed to the mast, and each had a waterproof cape.

The thunder and lightning were grand in the extreme!

We lay and dozed till the storm ceased, when out we crept to the fire, hardly daring to hope that any life was in it. Yes, the big stone fireplace had been

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so built that a few embers were alive and in due course a roaring fire blazed up again, at which we sat and enjoyed a little hot grog. Again the thunder cracked overhead and the rain fell, driving us into the canoes once more. We each paid one more visit to the fire, and it looked quite cheerful in the morning, so that word was passed early through the camp that tea and eggs were ready.

A start was made before a good breeze, with the little sails generally winged, but ere long yesterday's troubles began once more in the shape of 2 miles of rocky, shallow river. However, both of us were very fit and made light of stumblings among boulders. On entering Loch Lydoch (or Luydan) we landed for luncheon, and later on we had to land again to repair a leak in the older *Zephyr*,—the first and only one she developed—the result of her last battle with the rocks. In half an hour, our sail was resumed, a permanently watertight repair having been effected. We entered the river Gauer and experimented down the first rapid, but finding insufficient water we carried up again to the Loch and paddled to its head.

For thirty hours we had seen neither man nor beast except one blue hare.

Now we were half a mile from the head of a new railway where blasting operations were in progress. A rough, newly-made road ran from railhead to Loch Rannoch, nearly 6 miles off, but it was a long way to any inn. We walked off as the day was closing to see what could be effected in that desolate neighbourhood by means of energy, persuasion, and a liberal employment of the "sinews of war," and finally with great difficulty transport was arranged.

Next day, after the roughest of nights, we walked down to Loch Rannoch and embarked at the bridge.

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We were soon able to note the change from the previous solitudes, for there were many fine lodges on the banks of the loch and many people in boats, fishing. With a fine wind we sailed to Kinloch, 10 miles, and were soon sitting at a good table in the Bun-Rannoch hotel, making up for want of recent opportunities, and taking things comfortably.

In the afternoon a start was made on the river Tummel, with fast water under us, charming scenery on all sides, and no boulders, but after 6 or 7 miles the character of the water changed.

We entered a rocky gorge and encountered the first of some sporting rapids which we thoroughly enjoyed, though each succeeding one became more difficult. At last we knew by the ear that a heavy drop was in front, and so landed to prospect, at which some ladies ran down to warn us. The difficulty was solved by wheeling each canoe in turn on the one still-serviceable carriage.

Within a short distance some queer places were negotiated, till we were brought up by the river falling through another impracticable rocky gorge. Immediately above this, my canoe, flying in a rush of water over a drop of 2 or 3 feet, came with a desperate crunch on to a rock, making the floor-board jump again. Fortunately she struck about the centre, so the pace and stream carried her over. The false keel of oak was cracked through, but owing to its elasticity the keel itself, and framework generally, was absolutely uninjured.

Here a long portage was inevitable, so, as it was getting dark, we left the fleet in the bracken by the side of the road, and walked with our bags 2½ miles to the Bridge inn.

We had originally intended to leave the river near

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Pitlochry Falls, cart over Glen Tilt, and enter the river Dee above Balmoral, having received H.M.'s permission, through my old friend Sir Fleetwood Edwards, to come down the Castle waters. However, it was recognized that there could hardly be enough water, so the next morning saw us reclining luxuriously, on a deep bed of straw in the bottom of a cart, retracing our steps to the fleet, which we found as it had been left. Having loaded up, we walked the 10 miles to Struan station, while the driver rode.

We trained back to Aberdeen and spent Saturday and Sunday at my brother's house, and then trained to Ballater, where we might expect enough water to come down the Dee.

A furious gale was blowing, with sheets of spray driving off the water, so it was most difficult to select the best course or notice the half-sunken rocks, till it was too late to avoid a bump. Then again, in the furious squalls it was practically impossible to steer a true course between rocks in the rapids. When the wind was aft, the pace in rapids had sometimes to be restrained by the back-stroke, but once, with wind dead ahead, we hung motionless, though we were in a fast stream and paddling all we knew.

On another occasion I saw C.K. bend low to the squall and almost disappear in spray. It struck me at the same moment straight in front, and in a second, an eddy struck me, full on the beam, with a blow that turned us over down to the coaming, and a capsize seemed almost certain. However, the great righting power of the *Zephyr* again saved the situation.

We came over the little fall at Potarch Bridge very prettily.

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On one occasion, in the middle of a rapid, I stuck on a rock just awash and then swung across another, bridging the interval in a current far too heavy to stand in. By swinging one leg overboard it was just possible to free her and take a fresh flying start. It was the only practicable channel, and to avoid ramming me, C.K. had to execute a difficult tactical manœuvre.

The gale had so delayed us that it was six o'clock before the difficult water just above Blackhall Castle was reached, but the Castle party was still waiting to see the descent of the two most important rapids.

Our start, however, was not brilliant, for on entering the first, the leading canoe was driven by a side squall on to a rock. For two or three minutes the fleet did nothing, which looked as if it funked, but in reality a lull was being awaited. Shortly, however, the plaudits of boys running along the bank testified to the successful descent of both rapids, and we were soon enjoying the very welcome hospitality of the Castle.

Next afternoon we started again on the river, which was now in spate, and at once entered a fine rapid which concentrated at its foot into a great curly-crested wave, which exercised a curious fascination on the canoeist sweeping down into it. Never, perhaps, had a *Zephyr* driven a tilt at quite such a formidable fellow. The crest appeared to curl over and break on the deck about 4 feet from the bow, and a mass of water rushed over the well-cover, though very little got below.

C.K.'s canoe, being a trifle less buoyant, practically disappeared in the wave, according to the spectators, but he reappeared smiling, and with only a few quarts taken in.

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The gillies declared that no money on earth would induce them to attempt these rapids. The next one was a treat—a long sluice of about 100 yards, with sharp-crested waves tumultuously tossing, appearing certain to break first on one beam and then on the other, and yet permitting each *Zephyr* to ride like a duck among them.

After a third rapid, "Good-bye" was said to the last party of friends, and then the character of the river changed, rocks and boulders being things of the past.

Rapidly covering the 21 miles to Aberdeen we were soon once more at Johnston House, debating anew which was most worthy of commendation—whether the older *Zephyr* for her splendid constitution in standing such heavy knocking about; the young *Zephyr* for her exceeding sprightliness in broken water; or ourselves, in that on no occasion did we expend more than one match in lighting one fire.

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CHAPTER XIV

SERVICE AT MALTA AND ALDERSHOT—1894–9

In 1894 I was appointed Colonel on the Staff, C.R.E. Malta, under whom were two sub-district C.R.E.'s.

I occupied the spacious and delightful quarters of the old-time Knight Falconer, an ideal house for entertaining. One entrance was from Strada Britannica, while another at a much higher level was from picturesque Scozzesi. Over the drawing-room was a fine arcaded court which was made into a full-sized Badminton court by closing the openings with wire netting. Above was a terrace with a grand view over the harbour, whence on very rare occasions Etna might be seen; while there were roof-gardens where one could enjoy the scent of flowers, and watch the humming-bird hawk moth.

There were many thorny questions with the Civil Government anent lands, building near fortifications, etc., but at the end of my five years we parted friends. On the other hand, the work in connection with construction of modern defences, new barracks, etc., was most interesting, and, withal, the close connection with the splendid officers of the Grand Fleet was an experience highly valued by me. From early days my interest in the Navy had been almost greater than in the Army, and an Admiral once remarked, as we were talking about the earliest

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ironclads, "Why, you seem to know more about them than I do myself."

I opened each winter season with two nights' theatrical performance. C.K. (who was then at Malta) was an accomplished actor, and therefore became stage-manager. His wife, who lived some time with us, not only acted but sang beautifully. The stage was erected for rehearsals a month before the night, and all performers dined, so there was no trouble in getting every one for rehearsals. At one dress rehearsal, at which were present R.E. N.C.O.'s, their wives and others, there was a village "walk round" as finale, when Toby, my bull-pup, unexpectedly appeared on the stage, fell in at the tail of the procession, and carried on as to the manner born. The applause was deafening, and the intelligent beast well knew it was for him. Some of the actors were, it is true, a wee bit anxious about their calves, but each succeeding night I held Toby at the wings till his turn was come, when he took and held his position with absolute precision.

Toby was a well-known sight at the officers' bathing cove. On his first visit he went in off the spring-board after me, nor would he ever enter the water in any other way. His delight was to scramble up the steps and race some one for the spring-board. His swimming weight was only 40 lb. He never attacked other dogs, and seemed perfectly indifferent to bites, but generally put to flight his opponent by persistently boring for the throat, though he benevolently refrained from seizing when he might.

One day, as Toby was going into the sea, a lusty Irish terrier seized him savagely and firmly behind the ear. The owner feared Toby would be damaged, but I said, "It will be bad for your dog if Toby

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happens to get angry." The next minute he wrenched himself free, and quick as thought, seized the other close to the eye. In view of the distress of my friend I told him to hold his dog while I got mine off. Now the P.M.O. had very recently told me how to get him off without doing him injury. It took me nearly a minute's apparently brutal treatment to get him off, when he smiled up in my face, said " Bow-wow," and immediately dived into the briny with a great gaping wound in his neck which left a scar for years. He seemed to feel no pain and enjoyed himself as usual.

My most enjoyable swims were out at sea, towing the canoe with the painter in the mouth. On one occasion I reported to have seen a smallish shark, and was told it was possible, since the Suez Canal had been cut.

I rode all over the island, finding many a charming spot unknown to others, who confine their outings to the Marsa, where polo, cricket, football and races take place. Now these are excellent health-giving sports, yet the leading Civil practitioner could inform me that the Marsa was worth £600 a year to him. The fact was that, when heated, men drove back instead of riding or walking, became chilled, and at once took Malta fever.

The Naval and Military Hospitals were full of fever cases, and eventually it was proved beyond dispute that bad drainage was not the cause. The best proof of this was a bad outbreak in the new Imtarfa Barracks directly they were occupied. These were on virgin soil on the highest ground, up to date in all respects, with a fresh pure water supply, and of course completely new drainage. All fever outbreaks were recorded in my office, and it was

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clear beyond dispute that less fever occurred in the old Casement Barracks which had a window at one end and a door at the other, and had ancient and "impossible" drainage, than in the more modern ones. I used to say that bacilli of all sorts probably swarmed in these old sewers, and so preyed on one another that the fever bacillus, whatever it was, had not a chance.

Malta fever has since been traced to goats' milk, although the goats themselves were healthy enough. In my time cows' milk was taboo, but now that goats' milk is barred by Navy and Army, Malta fever has practically ceased to be the scourge it was.

Probably the most interesting geological feature was the Great Fault which extended right across the island, the whole of the west end having sunk, or the rest having been upheaved. We had recommended to utilize this in constructing a line of defence across the island in case of any temporary loss of command of the sea. It was not, however, until the beginning of 1895 that the War Office wired to know if we could start the work and spend a few thousands before March 31.

The C.R.E. of the district said he could not possibly undertake it, being up to his ears in work completing and billing all his services before the end of the financial year, when any unexpended balance would be lost to him. I therefore took up the executive work, which proved most interesting. In two days my report with estimate for the whole job went home, approval was cabled, and work started instantly.

Communications across the deep rocky gorges, intersecting the Fault, were indispensable, so my scheme was for a so-called defensible Patrol Path from sea to sea, a length of 8 miles, having a vertical

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obstacle of 20 feet, which was either obtained by scarping, or by ditches in rock with parapet or wall. Steps led up and down gorges whose bottoms were crossed by solid walls, carrying the path, with loop-holed parapets. Endless retired flanking places existed and caves were made use of as guardhouses.

In the case of roads leading through the Lines on the enemy's side, the rock was cut out in squared blocks and then packed in again, ready to be lifted, so as to form the ditch and to build up the parapet.

I laid out every yard, Merriman waiting patiently for me among the rocks, but as lively as a kitten when he had me on level ground.

The Maltese quarrymen and masons were splendid workers: strong, sober and most industrious—very clever in splitting off great masses of rock with tiny charges of dynamite, and in squaring blocks with the axe.

When I left in 1899 the work was practically finished, the cost being no more than my rough estimate given at the commencement. As the labour was cheap and excellent, the cost was a mere nothing to what people thought it must be, and certainly nothing to that of one submarine.

A full description of what was to be done in time of war was left; but much was forgotten at the Manœuvres after my departure. The south end of the Lines rested with a redoubt on a sea cliff: half-way down the cliff was a narrow track left for the convenience of fishermen, etc.; but a record was left that it had to be cut away. The defenders had not thought of this and so no notice was put up saying that this had been done. Now, with the attackers was Kirkpatrick (later Lieut.-General Sir George), who had been my Staff Officer. He led a

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party by this little track, and took the redoubt and flank in the rear, so that things went badly indeed for the defence.

The Governor wanted to call the Lines after me, but I stuck out for "Victoria Lines."

In order to inspect all possible south-coast landing-places, C.K. and I went for a canoe cruise round the island, but without sailing keels (or big sails), so that we could land more easily. There was a heavy swell, due to a gregale that had been blowing, resulting in grand breakers off Marsa Scala and on the Munciar Shoals, and causing us to take a course far out to sea to avoid them. We landed safely through the breakers at Marsa Scirocco, spending the night in the canoes, enlivened by important visits from Customs officials and our own visits to keep up the fire for breakfast. A very early start was made to inspect closely the creeks, coves, and caves of this truly remarkable rock-bound coast.

Luncheon was taken in a cove very difficult to see from outside and not marked on maps. When twilight came on we supped together off Madalena, sailing free under a tempestuous-looking sky, with lightning playing among distant clouds, both canoes being lashed together with two little sails winged on either side: that is with four sails set. Soon after supper we had to take to the paddle and reached home having covered 40 miles that day.

My report mentioned a landing-place which the Staff considered impracticable, so at my request the question was referred to the Admiral Commanding-in-Chief, who promptly replied that under ordinary conditions he could land a brigade in a couple of hours.

On another occasion we had a stirring cruise

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round Comino and Gozo, paddling away against a fresh breeze. We lunched on St. Paul's Island—"where two seas met"—and then, beyond Melliha Bay, seeing a gleam of light in a cave, we entered through a tunnel into a deep circular basin, very beautiful.

It was surrounded by overhanging rocks into which ran various caves. It had evidently once been a great cave whose domed roof had fallen in, the debris of which had in course of ages been carried out to sea. The varied colours and reflections made a truly charming picture, and we wondered that no one seemed to know of it.

We reached Fort Chambrai, Gozo, distant 17 miles, and left the fleet in a shed with two lively boys, Carlo and José, to look after them. We thought them the nicest boys of our acquaintance and left them half a fowl and other delicacies while we walked the 4 miles to Rabato, whither our bags had preceded us. Next morning we found our canoes moored at different points of the harbour, with sails and gear in a confused and intricate tangle, so that whatever went wrong during the rest of the trip was put down to the delay caused by those young rascals Carlo and José.

The wind was fresh ahead, as we paddled westwards, under towering cliffs. We entered many fine caves, where we enjoyed perfect calm and lay watching the fish in the clear depths.

We passed through a long, very narrow tunnel through the cliffs, into an open sheet of water, with a pebble beach, shut off seawards by the cliff wall 150 feet high, the land inside having sunk over a large area. This, again, seemed quite unknown in Malta. Later on I was able to show it to the

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Admiral Superintendent and his large party of friends.

We kept paddling till the seas became less confused, and then ran fast under reefed mainsails to Marsa Forno.

Here, having previously taken the precaution of providing ourselves with landing permits, we could satisfy the meticulous inquiries of Customs officials, and then walked off to Rabato for the night.

On our return next morning we found the surrounding population gathered to see the start—priests and police, Customs and fishermen, young and old. One and all declared that the sea was far too rough, but away we paddled, for it was wisest to learn something about the seas before setting sails, though the wind was aft. After we had gone some 2 miles, the Customs' boat came sailing after us to see if we were all right, which was very good of them as they would have a hard beat back. We then set close-reefed mainsails only, and explored the beautiful caves under the lee of Commino Island. We were caught in a heavy squall in the channel, which made steering in the short seas very hard work, though our long 9-foot paddles in the crutches gave great power, and with the heavy sailing keels we managed to make good weather. The sail home was the most exciting we ever had, for the little craft seemed to fly on the broken crests, in the constant squalls.

On running into Quarantine Harbour, having covered 21 miles, we found that yachts were close-reefed, so the little *Zephyrs* had not done badly.

One afternoon I paddled into a long tunnel, some miles east of Ricasoli, leading into a great high-domed gloomy hall from which led another tunnel

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into a little bay; but as the opening was low and occasionally a bigger swell than usual would fill it I finally decided not to risk going out that way. An inexplicable muffled roar filled the hall, so next day I returned with a lantern to discover its origin.

Another tunnel was then found leading inland, and this narrowed at one point, leaving only space for us to creep through. Then the channel widened, and the cave finally ended with a pebble bank on to which the wavelets from the outside swell were continuously breaking, and the noise was intensified by reverberations. Maltese boatmen, fishermen and others are so superstitious that they do not enter such places and nothing is known of them.

On one occasion when an Admiral was taking me round the island and we were less than a mile from shore, I pointed out to him one of our newest batteries, but he could not make out the smallest sign of it, for all my indications. "Well," said I, "how would you attack it?"—"I should not attack it." Yet the Navy in the Great War made that maddest of attacks on the Dardanelles with every possible condition on land and water against them. At the first I openly said that the attempt must fail unless a landing force of 100,000 men accompanied the Fleet.

On one of our Field-days at the far end of the island, I happened to be Senior Umpire and was riding behind a posse of Umpires and Assistants, on Barbs and Arabs, when I noticed in a large rambling village that we had gone wrong. Advising them all to go back, I decided to try a short cut by a goat-track down the Fault, which it had been my wish to examine. In spite of Thomson's warnings—for he then was my Staff Officer and knew my horse's

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accomplishments—two came with me, but one soon gave up. Ere long the other, ex-Master of the Cyprus Hounds, decided to go back while it was possible. But Merriman, following me like a dog, dropped quite composedly from ledge to ledge, and so we arrived at the rendezvous long before any of the others.

One more similar case to show what an English horse can do. In my explorations we came upon a reservoir embankment closing a deep ravine. On clambering up it there appeared a very narrow foot-path or goat track, with a drop of nearly 20 feet into the water on the left, and the precipitous escarpment on the right, with only just room for the horse who followed me, with the reins on his neck. After going some distance, it gave me a shock to see that the track was cut away for a width of 4 or 5 feet; and it was, of course, impossible to turn back. Without hesitating or giving a sign to Merriman that there was anything unforeseen, I hopped across and he strode over the gap without a sign of nervousness. When the story was told to the R.E. officer in charge of that district, a good sportsman, he said that where one horse could go, there his good Arab could also go. But I begged him to leave the horse and view the place alone first. Having so done, he declared that nothing would induce him to try a horse that way.

In 1896 I built yet another *Zephyr* in my quarters. It was only finished the night before it, and its two veteran sisters, were despatched to Donaueschingen, where my brothers Miles and C.K. (who were on leave) joined me from England for a trip of 780 miles down the Danube to Buda Pest. In all their land travels the canoes suffered not a scratch, for each

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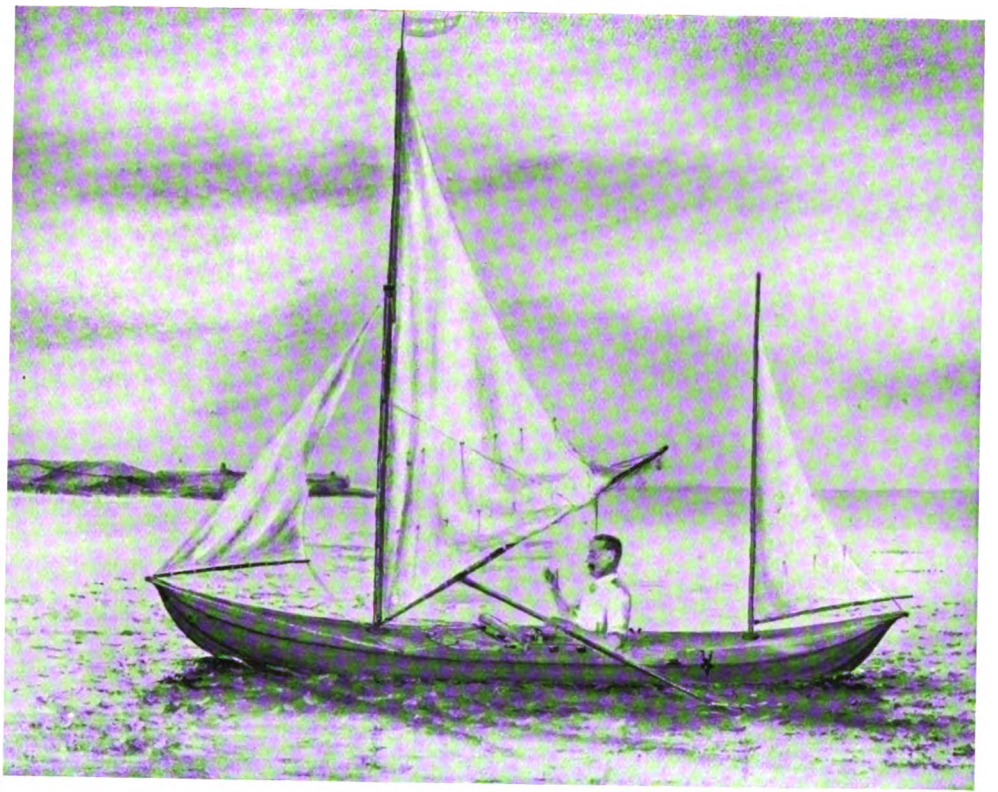

THE ZEPHYR OFF MALTA

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was protected by six hoops of straw sewn up in canvas.

[1]It was on September 3 that we three brothers met at the delightful little town of Donaueschingen in the Black Forest, where the three canoes had safely arrived.

At dinner, at the Gasthaus von Schutzen, where we partook of Danube trout, I was elected Commodore in virtue of my varied canoe experience during thirty years; C.K. was appointed Vice; while Miles, having no experience, could only be treated as a "longshoreman."

A start was made on the morning of the 5th, and from the first our interest was divided between the ever-changing scenes with their lovely reflections, and the exquisitely clear water, where large numbers of fine fish were frequently to be seen. Then again, herons, swans, wild duck and snipe, with many other birds, enlivened the scenes, especially during the first few days.

Between Donaueschingen and Ulm there are twenty-five dams, and we had dragged over two of them when Miles came badly to grief. This dam was quite different from the rest, and was formed by planks fixed in an iron framework, extending across the river.

A narrow opening, divided by an upright iron stanchion, was left close to the near bank, through which the stream was tearing under the footway, which led across the dam. The Commodore was proceeding very cautiously to pass through the sluice, while the Vice lay against the bank awaiting events, when the "longshoreman" (whose first canoe trip this was) was swept broadside on to that

[1] Extract from the *Royal Engineers' Journal*, January 1897.

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stanchion. The canoe rolled over; but M., active as a cat, swung himself on to the footway, and at the same instant his craft jammed the Commodore's in the sluice. Immediately that the latter was clear, the bow of the other dived to the bottom, but the stern remained above water, owing to its watertight compartment. Some haymakers rushed to help and, before they could be stopped, jammed a great iron hook into the bow, and all three on the long handle with a strong jerk wrenched the nose of the canoe clean off. It was a solid block of walnut on to which the seventeen longitudinal rods were screwed.

This was discomforting, but the roar of the waters drowned the forcible remarks which followed. The well of the canoe was lying upstream and the pressure of waters was tending to break her back across the stanchion. Total loss seemed possible, while C.K. and I took rapid counsel.

Some chains were at hand, which were passed under her, and then, using levers, five of us with difficulty raised her, for she had become tightly jammed. Though the elastic framework had stood the test perfectly, it was of course necessary to stop the night in order to refix the bow-piece. At the neighbouring village of Geisingen the Chief Constructor's knowledge of German was sorely tried, in asking for white lead, copper strips, etc., required for repairs. A sound job, however, was duly effected and the fleet was able next morning to leave the dock in the hayfield and voyage onwards. Very delightful voyaging it was, except that below two or three of the weirs there was so little water that the fleet had to be dragged over rocks and stones for considerable distances. Indeed, it was agreed

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that there was less water the farther we got from Donaueschingen during the first few days.

Just as we reached Tuttlingen (42 miles from Donaueschingen) a heavy storm broke on us and we ran for shelter to some floating baths.

Next morning, having a fair wind, the little mainsails and mizens were set. As Miles only set the mizen, which could take care of itself, he had also to use the paddle in order to keep station. This day we passed seven weirs over which but little water was flowing. Our usual plan was to get out bare-footed on the lip, push the canoes down and get on board as best we could, though sometimes it was easier to drag across the fields. For this work the Vice was very expeditious, and the fleet was run over quickly, though heavily laden, for each of us had an extensive wardrobe in two bags, while small portmanteaux had been sent on to Vienna.

Near Mühlheim, though there was little more than an inch of water on the lip of the weir, yet, as its slope was smoothly paved, the Commodore went at it full speed and got safely down. However, adopting the same tactics at the next weir, his craft received such heavy bumps on rocks and stones that he decided to wait for more water, especially as he was entrusted with the well-stocked luncheon basket.

At Mühlheim the scenery became very grand and beautiful. Often we were at a loss, on looking ahead, to know how the river would pass out through lofty cliffs, so involved was its winding course. We spent an hour as usual over a picnic lunch ashore; we lay under a bridge in a heavy thunderstorm; we raced down many an enjoyable rapid in bright sunshine; and at six o'clock, having covered about

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35 miles, we dragged the canoes ashore above the village of Hausen. Here, as elsewhere, we were made very comfortable in the little inn; and it was not till next morning that we discovered the previous day had been Sunday and not Saturday. This shook our confidence not a little in the acting chaplain, Miles, who explained that in so much travelling he had lost count of a day.

We climbed up to a ruined castle on a pinnacle of rock 600 feet above the river, whence was enjoyed the striking view of forest, rock and river. The botanist of the party would gladly have lingered, but hardly received as much encouragement from the others as the artist did. The latter was, indeed, quite surprised to find himself invited not infrequently to stop and sketch some charming scene, instead of being begged to "come on and not keep the whole fleet waiting."

That afternoon 20 miles of charming scenery was passed through, reminding us, now and again, of the Wye, the Tummel, and bits of Norway, where in some lake-like pool a huge perpendicular rock would run sheer down into deep water.

We lunched during a thunderstorm, floating in a spacious cave under a cliff, in a contracted wooded gorge, and fed fish in the deep clear water below us.

At Sigmaringen, under the magnificent Schloss of the Hohenzollerns, was a weir that promised me some excitement. At the lip, over which very little water was flowing, was a drop of a foot on to the smooth, gently-sloping face, which terminated in another drop of 3 feet. The risk was of sticking on the slope and then being swept broadside into the tumble-bay. A heavy cross-stream running to the mill complicated matters. However, at full speed

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we jumped the lip, but stuck near the bottom, and it was only after a struggle that the *Zephyr* safely plunged into the river, with her crew half in and half out of her.

This afternoon we had to pass six weirs, but eventually, after about 30 miles, we slept at the little village of Sheer, having enjoyed on the way some weird mist effects.

Next day we entered an open country, having a grand stream under us. After passing some picturesque villages, we arrived at Riedlingen, where was probably the deepest of the weirs—estimated at 8 feet. I safely shot this, though the descent was a bumpy one, and received quite an ovation of lifted hats from the usual little crowd.

At another weir which I shot, Miles let go his painter before getting into the canoe, and away she was swept into a back eddy under the centre of the weir. C.K. promptly took him on board as a passenger and safely delivered him on to his truant craft.

This day tern, redshanks, sandpipers, herons and kingfishers were numerous, while occasionally a goshawk was to be seen, or a snipe would go screaming away.

Many of the reaches here ran under steep hills clothed to the water's edge with beech, ash, and oak, while in other parts giant rushes and reeds fringed the river, out of which duck rose ever and anon.

At Munderking (40 miles) we dragged the fleet on to a field and soon a crowd flocked round us. A schoolmaster begged us not to leave the fleet in the field with so many boys about, but we said we would trust them, and soon there was a triumphal

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entry into the ancient and delightful little town, our bags, paddles, etc., being carried by many willing hands.

September 9. We sailed lazily most of this day, and all the way found haymakers still turning over the hay after the daily storms. When on board we were so thoroughly waterproof that storms mattered little, and the sun almost invariably came out strong for lunch, that important event of the day. Also it hardly ever failed to give us a lovely sunset.

At one of the deepest weirs, there was a fierce rush of water near one side, so that there was no risk of bumping, though, owing to a strong cross-current below, the canoe could hardly avoid striking the low cliff at the foot. The Commodore rushed gaily down into the curling billows, but as the cross-waves breaking on the beam were heavy, it was dangerous to try and force a straight course. It was best to let the *Zephyr* do as she wanted, viz. butt the cliff with her bow, spin round, and finish the course stern foremost.

At Opfingen we came to the last weir, which C.K. and I both shot, for here was plenty of water with a moderate fall.

Just before Ulm the rapid Iller, cold, thick, and white, entered the Danube from the Alps. From this point the river lost all its clearness and we could no longer steal on the pike lying below the reeds, or watch the hurrying shoals of fish up to 2 or 3 lb. in weight. From this point, too, we were no longer in touch with the good people who would gather at the weirs and wooden bridges, and with whom one might have a pleasant word or two.

At Ulm (33 miles) the fleet was left at the Boating

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Club, and we had a good walk outside the fortifications before dinner, after which the secretary of the club joined us at wine. Next morning he showed us over the excellent boating club-house, where there was a good show of outriggers.

After visiting the most interesting Minster, whose spire, 525 feet, is the highest in Europe, we started at noon next day for a run of 48 miles to Donauwerth.

Hitherto distances had been estimated by the map, but now the kilomêtres were all marked on the bank, so no mistake was possible—as far, at least, as the Austrian Frontier.

We landed on the wooded bank for luncheon, but so thick were mosquitoes that we climbed on to a railway embankment to be in the wind. Even then we had to take a hurried meal standing, so savagely persistent were these pestilent insects!

The river now ran through a marshy district, charmingly fringed, however, with great willows and poplars. After a very heavy thunderstorm the setting sun behind us gave exquisite effects as we approached Donauwerth, where at 7 p.m. we left the canoes in a field, and ere long were comfortably housed in the old hotel "Krebs."

Next morning we saw barbel caught below our windows, and then strolled round this little town, typical of all that is charming in the way of high roofs and gables, with variously tinted houses, relieved by dark-green shutters, and window-sills bright with geraniums.

This day we sailed a good deal and were agreeably surprised to find that the river, though canalized, had none of the stiff appearance we had expected. In fact, the water was now generally within a foot of the top of the stone dykes, over which, in parts

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where the dyke was lower, streams were pouring into the old beds. In other places they were rushing back into side streams, the water roaring and swirling and causing endless variety in the river. On all sides, signs of the great summer floods were apparent: trees uprooted along the banks, and drift (chiefly hay) hung up in branches 8 or 10 feet above water.

The difference of pace varied enormously according to which side of the current was taken. Long and strong back eddies existed, and if the unthinking canoeist entered one, he had to endure the dismal sight of his companions rapidly getting smaller in the distance, lying at rest, while he had to paddle his hardest to overtake them.

After 32 miles Ingoldstadt was reached, an interesting fortified town, with fine churches. Here the people begged us not to leave the fleet on the bank, as had hitherto been our custom. One energetic gentleman kindly went and had an abattoir opened for us.

It should be chronicled to the lasting credit of the people on the Danube that we never lost a thing. Not a boating shoe or sponge, not even a piece of nice white-woven cord was missing, though many things were left in the canoes at night in order to reduce loads in our tramps to hotels.

September 12. Many a time to-day had we a view quite typical of Holland. At Weltenberg we entered a defile, 3 miles long, of rugged rocks and wooded summits, and finally, when close to Regensburg (Ratisbon)—48 miles—we met the one and only sculler on the trip, for the boating season was over. This gentleman kindly escorted us to the beautiful boat-house of his club, where our craft were housed among a crowd of smart outriggers of all sizes. We

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stayed here for Sunday, and were off again on Monday, choosing the right-hand and easiest arch of the bridge, through which the river was foaming and eddying grandly.

At first the wind was adverse, so we remained some time in view of the old castle of Worth and the interesting town of Straubing. Then a thunder-storm broke, so we drifted for half an hour under umbrellas. Finally, as the evening shades drew on we looked in vain for our goal—Deggendorf.

The fact was we had considerably under-estimated the distance on the map, and it eventually proved to be 60 miles.

Darkness came on, and the course was very perplexing, owing to islands, so that we were thankful when a little moon came out to help us in finding a landing-place at 8.15 p.m.

Leaving canoes in a field, we had a longish trudge to a comfortable hotel. This day we had come across cormorants and a few days later flocks of seagulls were met.

September 15. Thirty-six miles to Passau, which is picturesquely situated at the confluence of the Danube and the Inn, the latter being no less than 320 yards wide. Immediately opposite the Inn, the clear little Ilz enters the Danube, and we had a delightful climb up to the old castle, under which it runs, and then down steep wooded slopes to our canoes.

On the 16th we passed the Bavarian Frontier into Austria, where we were met by a Customs' boat and told to land and pay a personal tax of 2½*d.* each. We offered a mark for the three, but the officials would neither take it nor give change, so away we had to go and get the precise coin!

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The smooth, fast-running stream carried us through pleasant scenes, reminding us of Loch Voil and Windermere, and we did the 41 miles to Aschack in about five hours. Here we saw the first great flying bridge, swinging like a pendulum from a chain, anchored upstream, and buoyed over pontoons or boats. On one occasion the chain was estimated to be 600 yards long, supported at eight points. Higher up, the ferry-boats had travelled across on a wire rope stretched on high poles on each bank.

At Aschack the fleet was carried into the courtyard of the quaint little inn. Here, as everywhere, we found scrupulously clean beds and excellent viands. Indeed, so tender and juicy were the beefsteaks, here as elsewhere, that our landlady was asked to show how they were prepared. A bit of meat about two inches thick was produced, which in a few seconds was beaten down to less than half its thickness by means of a Fleisch-hammer—a wooden mallet faced with a studded metal plate. Though Fleisch-hammers were bought at Vienna for home use, we found English cooks too conservative to use them.

Quite a crowd saw us off next day, and with a fair wind and strong stream we soon reached Linz, where C.K. landed for letters. After this we entered a flat country and passed many wooded islands, but on approaching Grein, the river passed through a grand gorge.

At Grein (50 miles) the fleet was carried into the inn yard, and we had a pleasant walk that afternoon.

At breakfast next day a gentleman showed us a paragraph in a Linz paper, of which the following is the translation: "To-day just before noon there lay below the State Swimming School on the Danube three little boats called 'canoes,' on one of which a

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flag was flying with the name *Zephyr* thereon. The canoes, nutshell-like as they were, had each two three-cornered sails, so-called 'lateen' sails. In these well-decked little craft, somewhat like Greenland boats, three Englishmen resembling a Prince and two Counts (for nothing was wanting in their general appearance to support this high opinion) were undertaking a Danube trip of 1,300 kilomêtres. Two of them did not leave their boats: one made sketches, while the other, an older gentleman, took it easy; while the third visited the Poste Restante. In half an hour the Englishmen sailed."

It was satisfactory to know that the fleet after all its rough work presented so respectable an appearance, but from the first the Commodore had insisted on smartness!

From the start we had fine scenery nearly the whole 53 miles to Hollenburg, the bold wooded hills being deeply scored with rocky gorges.

Luncheon was taken on an island under the huge and celebrated monastery of Mölk, where Napoleon stopped on his march to Vienna, and where Baron Marbot performed the daring feat (as narrated in his memoirs) of crossing the flooded river by night, and capturing prisoners from Archduke Charles's army, in order to obtain information to lighten the "fog of war."

After luncheon, 10 miles were covered in the first hour.

At Durnstein we clambered up the rocky hill to the castle where Richard Cœur de Lion was held a prisoner, and there, among the ruins, we were surrounded by a variety of wild flowers which are garden flowers in England. The views on all sides were fine. Instead of towns or villages, little vine-

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clad cottages are scattered about, embowered in orchard or nestling under some lofty crag, while the closely mown slopes between rocks and dark fir woods were of the brightest green.

At the large town of Krems is a great military bridging establishment, for in addition to many pontoons on shore, there were 108 bridging boats moored in the river.

At Hollenburg there was no sign of inn or village, so the Commodore had to make a long reconnaissance before discovering one.

Next day we saw for the first time many great timber rafts floating down, of great length, compared with their width. Three to six long broad-bladed oars are lashed to each end, by means of which the crew, under direction of the captain, keep these huge rafts in the strongest part of the current, and so travel at a great pace.

Having covered the first 21 miles in 2¼ hours, after a somewhat uninteresting voyage of 41 miles we reached Vienna, and put up canoes at the excellently-appointed club-house "Lia."

At Vienna we were interviewed on behalf of a newspaper, the interviewer producing a sheaf of cuttings giving accounts of us and our doings. The Grein paper said: "Our contemporary of Linz is wrong in stating these Englishmen to be probably a Prince and two Counts, for we have inspected the hotel book at Grein and see that two are officers of her Britannic Majesty's service, and the third is an Imperial Royal Colonial Secretary, for the letters 'I.R.C.S.' after his name mean that." "F.R.C.S." had been written after M.'s name, and the "F" has some resemblance to the German capital "I," it would seem.

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The Commodore, being shy of correspondents, failed to look at any other of the cuttings, and incurred thereby the indignation of the others for not securing the same, for the only record in possession was that of Linz. Indeed, the Vienna paper was not consulted in order to see how the "Prince" was brought down yet one more stage to his proper designation.

After seeing all that could be seen in so short a time, we started again on the 22nd, and so cold was it that a roaring fire was made when we lunched on an island.

We explored Theben, a fine ruined castle on a lofty rock at the junction of the river March, the boundary of Hungary. Masses of masonry were lying in the river, the result of the demolition of this strong castle after the battle of Wagram.

After a 41-mile paddle Pressburg was reached and, dinner ended, we strolled in the moonlight up to the old Schloss.

Having a long day before us, we were off next morning at 7.30, and for the first 30 miles, with a current of some 7 miles an hour, we raced along. Then the river widened out and slowed down to less than one-quarter the pace. Luncheon ashore had almost been finished when a steamer came tearing down, so we ran to the canoes to be prepared for the waves; but a big one got there first and tossed one of them right on to the bank. Sundry articles were only saved by much agility on the part of every one.

The scenery, though flat, was charmingly broken by wooded islands and headlands. The sun set in great splendour behind us, while the full moon, salmon-coloured, rose in front, throwing its long,

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pillar-like reflection down the dark waters. In spite of the moon it was awkward in the dark to find a landing-place at the fortress of Komorn, especially as the Hungarians on the bank could not understand our German.

At last the fleet was housed with us at the König von Ungarn Hotel, having covered 71 miles, which was a record in our experience.

After dinner an officer called and kindly asked us to make use of the sporting club-house on the river, but we could only write our names, as at other boating clubs.

It poured next day and no one thought we should start; but as the wind was fair we sailed away, and with umbrellas over us too!

The current was feeble to Gran (31 miles); but the sun came out brightly on that charming place, which was quite one of the pleasantest on the river, with its imposing church on the hill, its remarkable tenth-century crypt, and the interesting little town with its bright-coloured market scenes.

After leaving Gran there was great variety of scenery, including one fine defile with a lofty hill, crowned by the ruined royal castle of Visegrad.

At last a fairy scene opened upon us: a lake-like reach 4 miles long, with the town of Waitzen glowing like a jewel at its head in the setting sun, with exquisite reflections blending land and water in one—quite a bit of the colouring of Venice. As soon, however, as the sun's rays passed, how prosaic did Waitzen appear!

The current had continued to be very slow, and the distance from Gran was only 25 miles.

Next morning, the 26th, we sailed the 19 miles to Buda Pest, where the fleet was hauled on to an

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old raft, and in a few hours it was dispersed on its land travels—one canoe to Herefordshire viâ Hamburg, and two to Malta viâ Trieste, while we ourselves were comfortably established in the Königin von England.

So ended the trip of 780 miles down the Danube, made by three brothers whose united ages were 150 years! There is nothing like the canoe for offering you comfort in which to view fresh scenes. You can sail along dreamily lying at full length with head pillowed on the deck; you can sit, as is customary, in the well; or you can sit on the after-deck, and with long, free strokes dance down the rapids at 12 miles an hour.

In 1898 I went on leave to England. As we stopped at Tunis and were to stop at Bizerta, I decided to leave the ship at Tunis and train to Bizerta in order to have a day at that important harbour and see all that one could—for the Fashoda trouble was at its height.

At a station on the way there was a group of French officers ceremoniously taking leave of two others of high rank who entered my compartment, where I was alone. They began talking while I continued reading, but with ears wide open. I heard something of considerable importance before they noticed me and dropped their voices to a whisper.

Arrived at Bizerta, early in the morning I visited the wonderful natural harbours, the inner one, unseen from the sea, being about 12 miles by 6 of deep water. The entrance to them was by a channel only 100 yards wide, and this was bridged as follows: open iron towers rose on either bank to 150 feet, supporting girders on which ran trollies: from these

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hung steel cables suspending a great platform, which travelled with its load of people and vehicles, from one quay to the other. That is now changed, but what a mark it was for hostile ships, and what a wreckage to block the channel!

Crossing to the far side, I visited the inner harbour, meeting no one, and then swam round the old iron-clad guardship in the outer harbour.

From the hotel, with my glasses, I could see on the high ground, about 3 miles off, crowds of soldiers hard at work, digging.

After lunch I started off to walk there, leaving pencils, note-book, glasses, etc., behind. My idea was to get unobserved to the far side of the high ground and then wander back over it from what we will call the attacker's side.

I managed to avoid sentries and others, and eventually strolled up aimlessly from the far side, into the middle of feverish activity. Two battalions were working away with a will, and screening out small stones from the earth for parapets, as we did at Malta, to lessen casualties from shells bursting therein. Ere long a Sergeant came up and asked for my "permission." Of course there was none, so equally of course I was escorted to the officer as had been expected, who asked how I had got there—to which the reply was that no one had stopped me.—"We cannot have sentinels all over the place, and besides every country wants to keep its secrets to itself." My cue was to be a frank, simple Englishman, though talking French, so I replied that we in England should not dream of keeping military roads or open works a secret. But I added, "I quite realize, however, that I have no business here and shall be grateful to be shown the

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way to Bizerta." So a Sergeant of Zouaves escorted me off the ground and directed me!

Before going far, however, I lay down under an olive tree, and then, seeing my friend the officer on a fine horse making for the town, I rose and joined him. On our way he was very unguarded in his remarks, saying they were sparing no expense and were employing an extraordinary number of Sous-officiers du Génie. No mention of Fashoda was made, but he little knew that he was talking to the C.R.E. Malta. On arrival in London, after a rather awkward experience in Paris, I at once visited the Intelligence Branch, W.O., and gave them information which would have been of considerable value, had war, unfortunately, broken out.

While at Malta many a pleasant visit did I spend at the Governor's country palaces of San Antonio and Verdala. The latter was a square-built castle on the highest ground, about 800 feet, surrounded by stunted sweet-smelling pines, a summer resort. Naturally it was haunted, for a ghostly face would be seen high up the castle wall where no window was, about opposite the ghost-chamber which it was my privilege to occupy. At midnight, with a lighted candle, I opened a very narrow door in my bedroom, descended a stone stairway in the massive outer wall, barely 18 inches wide—one had to go sideways —into a high-level dungeon having no window, and in whose walls were holes for the chains which secured the unfortunate prisoners. The ghost, however, failed to appear.

My Maltese menservants had been treasures. On Saverio, the chef, retiring on his savings, my butler pressed me to engage another who was "the best cook in the island, Signor, better nor the Governor's."

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"But," I said, "there was serious trouble between you when you were in service together!"—"Oh yes, he run after me with the knife, but he the best cook in the island; we get on all right." And so they did.

An old idea was resuscitated in my time, viz. to level up the truly wonderful Valetta fortifications by throwing the parapets into the great rock-cut ditches—a gross vandalism! I pointed out that the only result would be deep meaningless hollows, unless they pitched Valetta in also, as it had been built from the ditches, so the idea was dropped. The main ditch was about 80 feet from the bottom to top of the parapet, and very wide, with trees in it. I had a master key for all these great medieval works, including the Lines of Cottonera, Corradino and Floriana, and had many a Sunday stroll in them away from busy haunts; and was also able to give a key for the main ditch to H.S.H. Prince Louis of Battenberg, so that H.R.H. the Princess and her children might have a place for quiet exercise, their house being close by.

While at Malta, the Governor told me that I was to be the next D.A.G.R.E. and congratulated me on the fact. That appointment, however, was abolished when the next vacancy occurred.

Early in 1899 I went home and after a short leave went to Aldershot as Chief Engineer, under Sir Redvers Buller, with whom I had the best relations. He at that time, however, frequently expressed himself in unfavourable terms of the genus "Commanding Royal Engineer." On one such occurrence in his office I said, "Well, sir, you hardly ever have a good word to say for the R.E. officer; what have you to say for the N.C.O.'s

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and Sappers ? "—" Oh, they are splendid."—" Then don't you think that is greatly due to the officers ? " After the Boer War he completely changed his view of the officers and frankly and unreservedly told me so.

When that War was decided on, the first officers of his Staff, that he pressed to be appointed early, were his Military Secretary and Chief Engineer.

I was grouse-shooting in Ross-shire when I saw my name in the paper, and at once ran back from delightful Fearn, where I had spent more than one pleasant time with Mr. Brooke (later Sir John). Mrs. Brooke was the daughter of my old friends the Watsons, who had come down from Morvich to live on the Fearn estate.

On return to Aldershot I at once saw that the list of Engineer stores, as laid down in Regulations, for an Army Corps in the Field, would be altogether insufficient for the proposed Campaign.

The far-seeing Inspector-General of Fortifications, Sir Richard Harrison, called a small meeting at the Horse Guards to consider the matter fully. He applied for a special grant to cover absolutely necessary purchases, but without success.

Now there were savings on Engineer Services, which, by Regulations, should revert to Treasury control. In view, however, of this very urgent war necessity he decided to order these stores, as against those savings, in the last resort.

Then again, Major Girouard, R.E. (later Sir Percy), who had been appointed Director of Railways, came to me saying, " What am I to do ? On presenting my list of stores to the W.O. Committee I was told that it could not possibly be granted, and that I must make out a very different list." I asked

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whether, on very careful reconsideration, his demand was the minimum required, and on his replying that it was, said, "Take it back, state your reasons, and if everything fails, respectfully beg that another Director be appointed." And so he got his demand approved.

It is the old story: the politicians and Treasury officials hamper the soldiers desperately at the outset of war, and hardly give them a fair start.

Lord Wolseley did see ahead. Instead of the small allotment of pontoons for an Army Corps, he said, Take every pontoon in the country, good, bad and indifferent; and we took them. But this required no Treasury sanction.

Girouard knew the paramount importance of the railways, the shortage of rolling stock for Army requirements, the inevitable destruction of the great bridges with their standard girders for 130-feet spans; and the country had to thank him for much. The bridges might consist of many spans up to twelve, and my sketches show, as a rule, five spans in every bridge destroyed. How could these have been repaired unless provision of girders had been made?

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CHAPTER XV

THE BOER WAR—1899-1900

COMMAND OF THE FRONTIER POSTS

Ample accommodation had been taken up for Sir Redvers Buller and Staff by a certain ship. He declined, however, to start without any troops, so we went a fortnight later by so crowded a ship that I (a Temporary or Local Major-General) and the three senior Colonels in the Force (who soon became Major-Generals) were crowded in one cabin until Madeira. A little cabin with no porthole then became available for me, leaving the ever-spruce Pole-Carew with his fellow-Colonels, who suffered sadly from *mal de mer*.

Here, again, the Government's failure to face the inevitable handicapped the Military most seriously, and had it not been possible to move troops from India at the last minute, Natal would have been overrun. As it was, the Boers gave us the first hard knock, whereas I had always said that if we led off with a heavy blow, we ought to finish the business in six months. However, in the end they were more out of their calculations than we, as they counted on driving us into the sea in that same number of months.

The *Dunottar Castle* reached Cape Town on October 30, and on November 3 I was sent up to De Aar, an all-important railway junction, to com-

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mand the "Frontier Posts," while still carrying on as Chief Engineer.

At Cape Town I had called on some of my old friends of subaltern days, and was told that the *Zephyr* was remembered and that her doings had not been emulated. They held, generally, that we should never get to Pretoria, the Boers being far stronger than we thought.

I also dined with Lord Milner at Government House.

An advanced Base was being formed at De Aar, so defensive works were started at once on the surrounding kopjes. Having no Cavalry I was comforted by having that most valuable body of mounted Colonials, "Rimington's Scouts" or "Tigers."

Early one night, soon after my arrival, I learnt of the intended rising of rebels, on the following night, to cut the railway between us and Cape Town. I therefore wired to Rimington (later Lieut.-General Sir Michael) at Hanover Road (situated between me and General French at Colesberg) to collect as many of his men as possible, and stating that a train was being sent for his horses or "Boer ponies." The "Tigers" were detrained in the night, on to the veldt, not at a station, and, spreading in small parties, rounded up the farms over a large area and seized the rifles. Next day when Rimington came to report, I regretted that it had been impossible to avoid putting such an awkward task on mounted troops, but he answered it was just the job they liked. He added, "Murray would like to be allowed to go to Prieska: he is now on that road, 30 miles from De Aar with thirty-five men." Now Prieska was 120 miles from us, and some rebels had appeared

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there. "What sort of a man is Murray?"—"One of the very best." So he went, chased the rebels out of the place across the Orange River, and wisely returned by a different route.

Soon after, rebellion again broke out there, and I sent Alderson (later Lieut.-General Sir Edwin), who had now joined, with 300 Mounted Infantry to drive the rebels across the river and to proclaim martial law. After this the situation remained quiet until I was asked from Cape Town by what authority I had proclaimed martial law. The reply was that martial law had been proclaimed at De Aar before my arrival, and that wherever it was necessary to send my troops, there I considered that martial law could and should be proclaimed; and, further, that serious rebellion would spread if not sternly repressed. The Cape Government would have none of this, and cancelled my action, with the natural results. I wonder why I was not ordered to return the rifles seized in the raid previously mentioned. Two years later, a high authority on such subjects said that my Prieska action was perfectly justified.

Our timidity in dealing with the Cape Government resulted in our being taken at the greatest disadvantage by the Cape rebels, who gave us infinite trouble. We ought, as I held most strongly, to have grasped the nettle, formed our own loyal Town Guards early, and have secured the rifles.

In a conversation much on the above lines with the Secretary of State for the Colonies, after the war, I instanced how the Cape Government had appointed a Commission, to re-try sentences under martial law, although the same had, since cessation of hostilities, been duly legalized. He said that it had disappointed him; and as a matter of fact he

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abolished that Commission on his arrival in the Colony shortly afterwards.

My Command extended northwards to the Orange River Station, where we retained the only railway bridge over that great river which the Boers never destroyed: it was 70 miles from De Aar and 570 from Cape Town.

A force of all arms under Colonel Gough of the Lancers was sent across the river for an important reconnaissance, forming camp for the night at the next station, some miles out. The Mounted Troops, consisting of two squadrons 9th Lancers, a few Mounted Infantry and half-battery R.F.A., started out early next morning, leaving the four companies of Infantry to guard the camp.

Feeling anxious as to the result, I went up to Orange River Station in an armoured train, but as the day wore on, and the camp continued to signal "no information," we trained on there, where nothing was known. Directing the camp to be put in as defensible a state as possible, I trained on nearly to Belmont, and sent my two Staff Officers to neighbouring hills with glasses (a risky business), but they could neither see nor hear anything.

In view of the "intelligence" of the Boers and their perfect mobility, the fear was that they might cut off Gough, especially as his guns were not Horse Artillery guns. Orders were left for Gough to return to Orange River that night; and in the meanwhile all the available Garrison had been ordered out, by wire, to take up a covering position on the Boer side of the broken hilly country 2 or 3 miles beyond the river.

Gough had made a very bold dashing reconnaissance, finding the enemy in force, strongly posted

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many miles from camp. He engaged him, losing two very good officers killed and two wounded, among other casualties. We knew afterwards how relieved the officers were to be ordered in, in spite of very great fatigue, and how comforting was the sight of our covering Infantry in the twilight. The train brought in the wounded, being sent back after my return.

I missed my old charger, Merriman. He had been sent out on a very slow ship, ill-suited for horses, with no veterinary on board, and he and the only other "Staff" horse on board died after about nine days' sickness. My Bâtman, on joining, was in tears as he presented me with his two polished fore-hoofs. Though twenty years old, he was still lively as a kitten, and nothing could tire him. The trouble with the local ponies and horses, good as they were, was our blood-heating corn ration. I hardly ever rode one 45 or 50 miles without fever in the feet resulting—a serious matter! Never as a Subaltern had this occurred, after covering 60 miles, for my animals lived, as the Boer pony did, on oat hay, supplemented by grass when on expeditions—never on oats thrashed out of the oat hay.

Towards the end of November Lord Methuen relieved me, and my ordinary Engineer duties occupied me at Cape Town, when I revisited a few old friends and haunts. Alas, the war had caused some of the former to break with the English.

The Engineer of the great reservoir on Table Mountain having kindly offered to take me over the works, we went in a bucket up the cable lift. He said that the bucket took up 3 cwt. of cement, and that as we did not weigh so much it would be all right. The vertical lift was 2,500, so that on

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stepping off a jutting rock for the descent, it seemed a prodigious drop to the sea below. They had most serious and unexpected trouble with the great embankment. He showed me the plan of all the trial pits sunk over the site and they appeared amply close enough, especially as they gave uniformly good rock foundations; but after the Estimate was made a sort of bottomless pit was found, when work was in progress.

This caused an excess of a staggering number of thousands; but the Cape Government could not and did not blame him. I could not help thinking how the R.E. would have fared in such a case.

I visited the Cape Astronomer Royal to see if he could give useful hints for night-marching by stars; for I feared that men might be using the Southern Cross as a fixed pole like the North star, and so go astray.

He took me over the Observatory and showed the various sheets of the heavens photographed, whereby myriads of stars more and more distant are disclosed. In very truth, Infinity of Space and Infinity of Time, counting as light flies.

Again, on December 24, I started for Orange Station, being reappointed in command of my old district, and beyond up to Honeynest Station, near Modder River, where Methuen was established.

As the train was leaving Cape Town, the D. of R. told me quietly that there was strong evidence that an effort would be made to wreck the train, and probably near Somerset West. When nearing that place at night I kept a look-out, and certainly saw flash signalling at a little distance from the line, but nothing happened.

The water supply at the stations between the

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Orange and Modder Rivers was barely enough for the engines in quiet times, so I wired for a Government diamond-drill boring party to be sent up. They came, indeed, at once, but in a few days said it was useless going on, for we should not find water. Instantly sending them back, a Port Elizabeth firm was wired, who at once sent the right sort of men, whose work proved simply invaluable, as will appear.

The horses of the Scots Greys were so terribly conspicuous that we painted them with Condy's fluid, of which we had a superabundance, and the result was excellent. The horses, however, became streaky under rain, though, even so, streaks were not so bad for camouflage, as the zebra can tell us.

Learning that the Boers proposed harrying loyal farmers on the 1st of the new year, it seemed well to forestall them. Colonel Pilcher (later Major-General T.) was ordered to move from Belmont on Douglas on December 30, while Colonel Alexander with the Scots Greys would start the following day for the same town from Marks Drift on the Orange. I asked Lord Methuen to close the drifts below him on the Modder with his Mounted Troops by dawn on the day of Pilcher's start, as the Boers north of that river would, otherwise, cut him off.

Pilcher being well on his way, having previously prevented a soul from leaving his camp to carry possible information, I went on to visit Methuen and on the way saw his men only just leaving camp to close the drifts—then too late. He expressed his regret and surprise that his orders had not been duly carried out.

Pilcher made a very successful attack on the Boers, drove them from their position at Sunnyside, inflicting loss and taking a score of prisoners. Then

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learning that the enemy had crossed the Modder Drifts to cut him off, he withdrew promptly in safety; and there was time to recall the Scots Greys. The proposed Boer raid was, however, stopped.

Three or four days later, I moved all my available force up both sides of the river, each strong enough to deal with any expected opposition, in order to establish a bridgehead at the important Zoutpan's Drift. This was 12 miles up, by the near side, and nearly half as far again by the far side, the two columns being timed to meet simultaneously at the drift, which they did exactly. This was the first occasion of our establishing ourselves in the Orange Free State, thereby giving great security to our railway on the east. The Boers had held the drift for some time and still watched it. This bridgehead was a favourite post with officers and men, who took a great interest in the defences, which were typical of what is desirable, but not often obtainable. The garrison for the two sides of the river was five companies, eight guns, and some Mounted Infantry. The river was 260 yards wide and we bridged it as one had so often seen on the canoe trip down the Danube—a flying bridge of two rafted pontoons swinging to an upstream cable, 360 yards long, carried on half-pontoon floats; and also a pontoon travelling on a steel cable stretched at a high level from shore to shore. The drift was also fordable when the river was low.

Hostile Commandos at Wolvekraal and Goeman's Berg with two or three guns watched us, but never attacked, though we raided horses and cattle, and barbed wire for additional entanglements.

We had brought out from England some wireless equipment, with two or three Marconi operators, and

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had collared at Cape Town a much better lot consigned to the Boers from Germany. All efforts to get good results in the country round Orange River failed and the operators could suggest no reason. Eventually I sent them to the Navy at Simons Bay for use between shore and ships.

We had our abode and office in the miserable and cramped railway station at Orange River, but by no means to ourselves, as we discovered on the first night. Now though the light cavalry will awake me, the still more obnoxious heavy movers will not do so, even though attacking. One morning before dawn the latter were discovered in great force, so I decided to sleep in a hammock slung from long and strong staples driven into opposite walls. Then, Keating's Powder having been dusted over the rope ends of the hammock, my nest was safe. About the third night, however, the feeling was strong on me that the staples might draw out of the baked mud walls, with the result that the end of my spine might strike the hard floor, causing the end of my campaigning. Upon this, the india-rubber bath was placed under the hammock, and the india-rubber bucket full of water within it, at what was judged to be the proper spot, and then I was able to sleep, trustfully.

About 3 a.m. I was awaked by a shower of pieces of the wall and a great splash. I had providentially and exactly corked, so to speak, the water bucket!

The first morning that my man brought in a cup, I was about to drink the contents, thinking it was tea with milk, when he exclaimed, "That is your shaving water, sir." Such was the colour of the Orange muddy water. Of course we installed settling tanks, used alum, and tried filters. As to the port-

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able filters, they soon choked: indeed it was found that men working them became so thirsty that they practically drank up all the filtered water which they produced, so there was little gain for others!

On learning of the disastrous Colenso week, I remarked to my Staff that if Lord Wolseley's health had admitted, he would at once be sent out with Lord Grenfell as Chief of the Staff, but that under the circumstances it would be Lord Roberts with Lord Kitchener, who was then in Egypt. Within two days we learnt that so it was.

On January 9 I was called to Cape Town to see Lord Roberts, arriving on the 11th and returning again the same night.

Extract from letter to my brother, written in train, Karoo, January 12, 1900:—

". . . arrived at C.T. yesterday, found every one, including Lords Roberts and Kitchener, very pleased with what we had done, and desirous to keep me as long as possible as G.O.C. Orange River Section as well as Engineer-in-Chief. Then I lunched with Col. Rhodes at his brother's beautiful place, Groutskour, and had a lively, interesting talk with Lady Cecil, whose husband is shut up in Mafeking, as also is Lady Bentinck's, and she also stays at Groutskour. They look after refugee women. Poor Lady Cecil looked dark under the eyes from anxiety, but I hope she was cheered up a little by my optimistic opinions. I told her to write to Lord Salisbury to offer 10 millions to Portugal for Delagoa Bay, and Walfish Bay to Germany for her goodwill; and, if accepted, the Transvaal would collapse in three months . . ."

On my return I found that an interesting little episode had occurred. Kirkpatrick, R.E., was the Intelligence Officer, whom I had strongly advised not to cross into the Free State to gain information, without an escort. My A.D.C. Major Curtis (the late Major-General Sir Reginald), however, went off

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with him across the Orange with one Orderly and a Colonial farmer who knew the country.

Making a wide detour eastwards, they passed through a gate in a very strong wire fence, which extended for miles. Later, Curtis was about to ride up a kopje to get a view of the country, when the Colonist called him back. "Never," said he, "go to the top of a hill till you have ridden all round it." The next minute as they rounded the hill they saw a party of Boers in front of them. "We're done," said the farmer. "Not a bit of it," said Kirkpatrick, instantly turning to gallop back. The Boers then started round the kopje as a short cut to head them from the gate. Providentially the guide then remembered an opening in the fence right on the river bank, and doubling back, got home safely.

On the 21st I visited Belmont to see Colonel Rochford Boyd, R.E. (then in command there), start for a demonstration west of the railway. Again, next day, I was called to Cape Town to see Lord Roberts, and stayed one night. Having for once a free afternoon, I wired to Kalk Bay, 16 miles off, for a boat to be ready for sea-fishing, and with Curtis started with two men, who declared it was a hopeless day for fishing. We began by catching small fish, but then, changing tackle and bait, I caught eight beautiful Cape salmon from 15 to 30 lb., a steenbrass of 43 lb., besides sundry ground-sharks which were bludgeoned on the gunwale and their tails used as bait.

Poor Curtis, owing to the swell, took but little interest in the proceedings, but the boatmen caught a few. The salmon and steenbrass fought gamely.

On return to Orange River I had travelled 4,900

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miles on that line. The question of horseflesh was a very serious one, and the ever-pressing desire to increase at once the mounted force in the Field led to terrible wastage. After the sea voyage of thousands of miles, the animals would be entrained for 500 or 600 miles under the worst possible conditions. Later, Rest depôts were established at the ports where the animals could recover before being sent up-country.

At Belmont was a fine body of Mounted Australians whom I lent to Lord Methuen for a two-days' operation. They were assigned a side-show of their own, away from a war-trained restraining hand, and they rode their mounts to extinction. I visited and inspected them, then addressed the officers, saying that I knew they were all fine horsemen who, in their own country, with ample horse-flesh, might ride the tails off their beasts and then jump on others. Here they had but one horse, carrying heavy war equipment on a type of saddle hardly suited for war conditions: hence the state of the backs.

They entirely agreed and said, "What can we do to be useful, while horses recover, and fresh ones can be obtained?" So they went into camp on the veldt to the east of the railway, where they gave valuable protection on its most exposed side.

I really liked those fellows.

Lord Roberts had decided on a surprise concentration via Orange River Station. All correspondence was in cipher, including names of Units, so that my little Staff had to work into the small hours of the night. In addition to my Staff Officer, Major Bethell (later Colonel C.M.G., D.S.O.) and Curtis, I was given Major Poett, a grand worker (later Major-General, C.B., C.M.G.). Of course there were

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orders and counter-orders and arrangements were very complicated.

Major-General Tucker (later Lieut.-General Sir Charles) arrived at the station on the 27th, and being senior to me and commanding the 7th Division, I proposed that he should take over. He absolutely declined the job, but kindly lent me his valuable S.O. Colonel Belfield (later Lieut.-General Sir Herbert).

Our only line of advance was by the narrowest of defiles, the railway bridge. This was 450 yards long, for a single line only, of 3 feet 6 inch gauge, and with an open ironwork floor. This had been planked for wheel traffic, when we destroyed the Hopetown Road bridge early in the war. Trains, ox-wagons and horses had all to pass this way, and the planking required constant repair, which Sappers had to effect when they could, in short intervals of traffic, and generally at night. The sand approaches to get on to the line were as bad as they could be, and often we had to inspan thirty-two oxen to get a wagon up. However we hardened the sand by pumping water from the river, 60 feet below, as no timber or sleepers existed to make a corduroy track.

Tucker, having found one of my working parties sitting down—poor fellows, they may have earned a rest amid all the heat and dust and flies—told me he had "addressed them forcibly" (very little doubt about that)—"but ought not to have done so," as they belonged to me. This made me think a bit.

Two battalions, who had been with me from the first at De Aar and were now here, continuously at work on defences, etc., were sadly viewing the regiments fresh from England being passed to the front while they were slaving to make things easy for them! So I ordered an issue of a tot of rum (a

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practically solitary occasion) in recognition of their excellent work and behaviour throughout. Both Colonels thanked me warmly, saying that this expression of satisfaction was just the thing needed to buck the men up, while Curtis remarked that never was a General so cheerfully saluted. Good hard solid and monotonous work is not commended as it should be.

Kitchener, ex-R.E., gave just and ample praise for gallant actions, but I never ONCE knew him to do so in the case of works.

Many of my letters to my people at home were kept by them, and extracts from them will in future be given.

Extract from one dated February 3, 1900:—

". . . We work from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. and General Tucker has just been thanking me for running the job. People like himself and Staff, just arrived in the country, are naturally anxious about our long lines of communication, as to which I tell them we are infinitely safer than we were. To-day, on that terrible bridge defile a heavy train overpowered brakes and dashed into an ox-wagon, killing fifteen out of sixteen oxen, and was partly derailed.

"We are working a big and complicated puzzle at express speed, in the midst of changes, all in cipher. I am responsible for getting the troops from here on by road, while the railway does all it can with the troops coming up. My own troops, more than 11,000 strong, are spread as garrisons over a length of more than 120 miles. Owing to scarcity of water and grazing, due to long-continued drought, the problem of moving the mass of troops and animals away from this river through the defile in the time available seems almost insoluble. . . . Midnight, same day—In the middle of it all comes a wide-sweeping change for a larger concentration still farther north; and I knelt down for wisdom to avoid chaos. (Of course changes in information as to the enemy, and the necessity of deceiving him as long as possible, render changes on our part necessary.) You see up here we know the limitations in respect of water, which those 600 miles off fail to appreciate. Having worked out my scheme, it has to be coded; and I have cut my report into four; and now,

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as I write, there are the four Staff Officers working like good schoolboys at the head-splitting business; and as everything is in secret cipher of *three* kinds, it is slow work.

"*Don't talk about this to others.*

"Opposite our wretched Office and Quarters is a railway siding, and the noise night and day when horses are in the train is most trying. Mules are quieter, and oxen are quite calm. The kicking of the horses against the sides of the trucks is frightful, and wood is constantly splintered. Watering by bucket is slow work, and the jealousy of the desperately thirsty beasts may be understood. The flies are disturbing: in twenty-four hours 5,000 were caught on the office flypapers: that is to say that I counted them on one square inch and then multiplied by the number of square inches. . . ."

I had consistently urged that, instead of the troops being fed with frozen meat from the Base, we should live on the flocks and herds of the country either on payment or otherwise according to circumstances. The grass and much-prized water would thus be saved for our transport animals, freight would be saved, and Boers and rebels could not in future benefit by them. "Supplies," having made contracts to deliver so much from cold storage, thought otherwise.

About this time, rebels having again entered Prieska, authority was obtained to garrison that place with 300 men and two "Cape" guns, so Alderson was sent there with 600 men, before whom the rebels fled across the river. He had just comforted the loyalists with the assurance that at last they were not going to be deserted, when orders reached him for the whole garrison to join the main force. My regret, and Alderson's, was great indeed, as we knew what would be the result. As a matter of fact Kitchener returned to this district after Paardeberg, and required columns, totalling 3,000 men, to scotch the rebellion for the time *only*.

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On February 8 Lord Roberts visited us on his way north, and the first word his Military Secretary (later Colonel Sir Neville Chamberlain) said to me was, "Well, you cannot have had much sleep lately!"

Now as to the new wells previously mentioned:—we had reached good supply by boring at the Concentration Stations, but the deep-well pumps, and the steam, mule and hand-worked pumps, were lying at Cape Town and all my demands for them to be sent up proved unavailing. At last I wired, "We want water here not men. I claim priority for my pumps." They came—though probably my curt wire was not liked, but I was in absolute despair. They arrived only just in time, and by extreme efforts were got to work at Graspan and Enslin, the very day of Concentration.

Then I relinquished my Command and came on with Lord Roberts as his Engineer-in-Chief.

On leaving I received with lively satisfaction a kind note from Lord Methuen, thanking me for the support that I had been able to give him.

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CHAPTER XVI

WITH LORD ROBERTS: ORANGE RIVER TO PRETORIA—1900

On February 11 I joined Lord Roberts at Enslin, and next day we were at the great Ramdam vley. I had recommended that a strong column should be sent there direct from Zoutspan Drift so as to drive off and disperse the small commandos which had been watching us, and also to ease the question of water supply.

Colonel Hannay with Mounted Infantry was sent that way, but with no guns and much too small a force, so though he managed to get to Ramdam, he failed to displace the enemy. Poor Hannay was killed at Paardeberg in a hopelessly gallant effort. These commandos, thus left in our rear, were collected by De Wet, who shortly after captured our great convoy and thereby reduced the army to quarter rations of groceries, besides other grievous shortages for man and horse.

At Paardeberg Lord Roberts accepted my suggestion to sap up and down the Modder River bank close up to Cronje's camp. So much has been written about the war, that events will be but lightly touched upon, though the following extract from a letter home may be given:—

"Paardeberg, February 27, 1900. . . . Above the Boer Laager, Chermside's R.E. officers were daring: Colonel Maxwell (later Lieut.-General Sir Ronald) reconnoitring alone down the

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river bank daily, 200 to 300 yards in advance of the last trench, and blazing trees to mark the fresh night trenchwork. Enemy sniped all day from cleverly concealed trenches.

"My daily routine was to start early from Head-quarters, 3 miles below the Laager, and taking the Balloon station on the way, to leave horse on river bank and walk up this side to advanced trench, then back to cross by a small pont far in rear, and then a long walk to advanced trench on far side. In the afternoon to ride 5 miles to Chermside's Brigade and probably visit advanced trenches, necessitating some creeping. On my canter back from Chermside (later Lieut.-General Sir Herbert) last evening I was able to direct the fire, on to the hidden Laager, of our just-arrived howitzers, firing lyddite. The explosions were terrific!

"At 2 a.m. this morning heavy firing woke me; and, hurrying there, I found Smith-Dorrien's Brigade had pushed on over 400 yards, and Sappers were making a strong lodgement on the river bank with Canadians extending to their left. Within an hour I saw the Boers surrender, and later inspected their network of trenches and caves and the massed wreckage of wagons, carts, etc. . . ."

The Boer trenches were cleverly constructed thus: they were in short lengths of 12 feet and fired both ways, being disguised by bushes stuck in the thrown-up earth, and as the river bed was full of bushes they did not show up. They could lie in the hollowed-out bottom, which was in hard ground that did not need revetting.

The Modder was unbridged, and as we were on both sides of the river the conditions were most inconvenient, especially when the drifts proved impassable through rain. The wagons bringing up the pontoons were taken to meet the pressing needs due to the loss of our great convoy, and there was only local material for a light Infantry bridge.

As to pontoons, I had at the beginning sent to Natal double the regulation allowance for an Army Corps, for the all-essential bridging and re-bridging of the Tugela. With the rest Captain Travers, R.E.,

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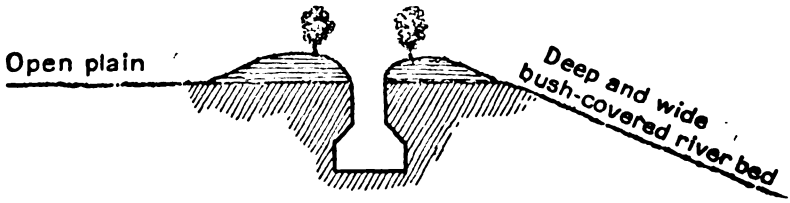
had to bridge the Orange, when the advance from Cape Colony direct on Bloemfontein was made. The spot chosen so as to be best concealed from hostile opposition was a very difficult one for such an operation, and the river was 266 yards wide. The very old pontoons were reserved for the near end and failed at once. Expecting this, barrel piers had been prepared and were substituted; so the bridge was completed within the time allowed by the General: a fine performance!

After some heavy rains at Paardeberg, when we



Section of Boer trenches at Paardeberg.

were soaked through several times, I counted 100 dead horses floating down from the laager in an hour. The Sappers had hard work to push the stinking carcasses off the banks. Nice water for the poor troops to drink, and as to boiling it, there would have been more inducement if the ration of tea and sugar had not been reduced to one-quarter!

On March 1 we moved up 6 miles to Osfontein for five days.

Extract from letter dated Osfontein, March 2, 1900:—

". . . Here we are, the Cavalry and Mounted Infantry being 6 miles further, with outposts in touch with the enemy's, and I rode out there yesterday and to-day. Our horses sadly want food and rest, for they have been starved owing to loss of convoys. They had for some time only 2 lb. of corn with some miserable grazing, and though they get 8 lb. now, some are only a bag of bones. I am just arranging to bridge the Modder at a wide

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rocky place with damaged ox-wagons put side by side at intervals; but as it is intended to carry loaded ox-wagons weighing 10,000 lb. it is by no means easy to make the roadway strong enough with the poor joists and planks which we can collect.

"Our Head-quarters are in a large farmhouse, and a mud-floored room was told off as office and living-room for G.O.C.'s R.A. and R.E. and their Staffs. The dirty crowded house full of servants, clerks and officers did not appeal to me, so Bethell, Curtis and I camped in the garden. A tremendous storm broke on us just as Curtis had made a splendid wigwam with a spare tent-wagon cover supported on trees and a large four-poster iron bedstead. Fellows now envy our Retreat, for when furious gusts of wind and rain assaulted it in the second night, it stood the test well. It is true that fearfully-voiced frogs do come out on all sides at night and call to each other, for there is a rill of water within 3 yards of us. We shall cut adrift from our communications on leaving this; and carry on to Bloemfontein with a huge convoy . . ."

On the 7th we attacked at Poplar Grove, but the Cavalry horses were still so weak that the Boers rode off without being seriously engaged.

We bivouacked at Poplar Grove, though Head-quarters had expected to return to Osfontein. Fortunately I had converted my spare horse into a pack animal with stores for the night to meet any emergency, and so we were able to offer some hospitality to our very good friends the R.A. Staff, who had nothing. Indeed one poor fellow spent a very shivery night without even a greatcoat!

On our marches all the way to Pretoria we did not have tents, but Lord Roberts had a covered vehicle which also served as his office.

On the 11th we entered Bloemfontein, welcomed by many, blacks as well as whites. One of my duties had been to ride on with a few Military police to mark out on the vley (or big pond) the part reserved for watering animals, and that for men. As the

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vleys at the farms were used for watering stock, and this was the thirstiest of countries, it is no wonder that the men went down in crowds with enteric fever, especially as it was endemic in the Orange Free State. As to this, however, some high medical opinion held that it might be "Camp fever," for the cases did distinctly better at Bloemfontein in tents than in the buildings. Unfortunately, inoculation had not by any means been rigorously persisted in.

Major-General (Local) Marshall (later Sir George), C.R.A. Army, and his Staff were housed with us in Bishop's Lodge close to the tiny "Cathedral," while we waited for the opening of railway communication with Cape Colony. We were in the most urgent need of hospital and Engineer stores, as well as of all munitions.

Hospital and defences gave the R.E. ample work, and I went South to inspect the great broken bridges over the Orange, and various posts for miles round.

On the 29th there was an action north of the Modder, and on the 31st, as we were retiring from the Modder Waterworks, 22 miles east of Bloemfontein, we suffered serious loss at the hands of De Wet, who with extraordinary boldness ambushed our transport in a shallow spruit. It was some time before the waterworks could be reoccupied with advantage.

On April 27 Curtis and I rode out there 22 miles to see about defences, the Post being known as Sanna's Post. We walked 6 miles round the Post, fording the river almost dryshod, and on our way home in the dark we found officers and men lost on the pathless veld. On return I walked up at once

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to tell the Chief; and will now give an extract from letter home:—

"... When Lord R. heard that I had been out to Sanna's Post, he said, 'I am so glad, sit down and tell me all about it.' It was a nasty place to hold with a small force, and the General and officers on the spot talked of three battalions with guns, etc. Now when we advance we can't spare such large detachments, so I suggested giving up all the high ground 1 or 2 miles across the Modder, and entrenching ourselves strongly in the river bed, as did the Boers at Paardeberg; also an entrenched post on rising ground on our side of the river: garrison one battalion and howitzers. The Chief adopted this view, though it may be too bold from the point of view of many; but we know that the enemy never attacked the small garrison at Zoutpan's Drift, though that was the only bit of the Orange Free State held by us for a considerable time. It will be a week before the waterworks can be restored to working order; and our main supply here is suspicious, to put it mildly. Enteric fever and hospitals are spreading on all sides. Our steam Diamond-boring operations have already given 80,000 gallons a day of pure water, and three other borings are in progress.

"Yesterday I visited a wounded young officer in the 'Portland' hospital—the most luxurious double-lined tents, springiest of mattresses, best of everything, and of nurses. He is in Grahamstown Volunteers, now Marshall's Horse, son of Sir Joseph Barry whom I knew in old Grahamstown days, so I wrote his mother to have no anxiety, for his only complaint is that he is not bad enough to claim much attention from his gentle nurse. He had been engaged 9 miles beyond Sanna's Post under a heavy fire, lying for 2 or 3 hours, and not seeing a Boer, who were posted among rocks. One bullet cut away the front of his bandolier—he was shooting in front, equipped like a Private—another cut his arm, and a third plumped into his shoulder, so as he could not shoot any more, he lay still. Five out of the six officers of his company were killed or wounded, but only an equal number of men; yet the only difference in dress was a slight one in the helmets which the keen-sighted Boers (who sometimes use field-glasses) can evidently distinguish, and so devote special attention to the officers. The unpleasant feature of these shows is the invisibility of the Boer and his remarkable power of getting away at the right moment. ..."

Another extract from letter home:—

"Bloemfontein ... An Entertainment for a local charity

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the other night was a most interesting business: hundreds of soldiers and others were unable to get in. After Rudyard Kipling's song of the absent-minded beggar—which, by the way, I don't care for—the response to the 'Pay, pay, pay' was a shower of money on the stage, which performers from the wings ran in to collect—a service of danger for those who, like Melton Prior, had bald heads, for coins came with force. £13 was thus picked up. Then came the 'Lightning sketches': two tall easels were set up on the stage and sheets of drawing paper 3 feet by 2 feet set thereon. Whereupon the two War Artists, Melton Prior and Wollen, began each to sketch the other in the style of *Vanity* portraits; making, as their pencils fly over the paper, humorous remarks and by-play. Then fresh sheets, and you see other portraits growing: one of Lord Roberts, who was not present, and the other of Kruger under the bold, vigorous touch of Wollen. Then Bennett Burleigh commenced the auction. Lord Roberts went by leaps of 5 gs. to 75 gs.; Kruger was a little sticky, but ran to 33 gs.; Prior to 16 and Wollen to 10. Total receipts, including tickets, £306.

"Miss Fraser, daughter of Fraser who ran Steyn so close for the Presidency and did all he could to stop the war, sang beautifully, having been well taught in London, Paris and elsewhere. To-day I met an Australian Colonel of my old Command who said how much they were all indebted to me for getting them on. In fact it is quite touching how gratefully—unnecessarily so—the various Australian Corps refer to our time together."

On May 2 Head-quarters left Bloemfontein for a steady advance on Pretoria, arriving at Kroonstad on the 12th, having had engagements at Brandfort, Vet River, and Zand River. We had to improve the deep awkward approaches to the drifts, the bridges having been destroyed; and here my long acquaintance as a subaltern with drifts and ox-wagons proved of value.

The most troublesome of our impedimenta was the heavy 4·7 gun on its cumbrous improvised carriage, manned by the Navy. Down one very awkward approach to a drift, gradient 1 in 4, I found the gun wheels locked, strong parties hauling back by ropes and the oxen pulling for all they were

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worth. As the road was being desperately torn up, I took charge, as I did on other occasions when it was necessary.

At Kroonstad all the five spans, each of 130 feet, had been destroyed by the Irish Brigade (by no means keen fighters) against the general wish of the Boers, who saw that our Army came on relentlessly in spite of destroyed bridges.

By this time the railway reconstruction train was far behind, so the R.E. Units with us, assisted by working parties of Guards and others, started the railway deviation. As usual the bridge was 60 feet above the river. A deviation as usual had to be made to cross at a low level by a temporary bridge, and in this case the length was 2½ miles, the additional rails being obtained by robbing sidings. Though rock-cutting was entailed, yet the line was through in eight days, much to Girouard's surprise.

The Boers had unlimited dynamite and used it most freely. One straight length of line, 3 miles long, looked like a huge millipede on its back, for all the ends of the rails had been blown upwards by small charges placed at their junctions.

On another length rails and sleepers, all attached, had been pulled right over by teams of oxen.

Having started the defences, we left Kroonstad on the 22nd, and crossed the Vaal to Vereeniging on the 26th.

Extract from letter:—

"Grootolei. . . . We left Kroonstad 4 days ago, and on a widely extended front right and left of the line is a host of Horse and Foot moving irresistibly on the Vaal. Our Main column with Head-quarters moves along the railway, which is wrecked on a record scale. Our first march of 20 miles brought us to the Rhenoster where the large three-span bridge was destroyed with nearly a mile of rails and culverts on either side

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of it. The drift was in a dangerous state: indeed one heavy ox-wagon rolled side-over-side down the slope, and the feet-in-air mules were actually salved little damaged; but it takes a good deal to damage mules. Then I rode downstream to find a better place, and again upstream 2 miles on same business. Here I reported to Head-quarters in two deserted farms a splendid lot of turkeys, fowls, pigs, sheep and cattle, and as a reward was presented with a welcome turkey. When owners are present we pay; otherwise, how can we?

"Then with Curtis I walked up and down the railway a long way to see how best to repair it, and found quantities of dynamite lying about and many charges in position unexploded. The Boers had prepared the river bank for defence, but did not stop to fight. The grass fires at night make a pretty display, but do not greatly worry us, for I never timed one to be moving as fast as 2 miles an hour. . . ."

After an engagement at Germiston we entered Johannesburg on the 5th and passed on to Orange Grove.

Information was received that Johannesburg fort was mined so as to blow up when we occupied it, consequently I had to make an examination which proved the information to be incorrect.

On June 4 there was some opposition at Six-Mile Spruit, and a 94-lb. shell from one of the Pretoria forts fell right between the oxen drawing the balloon close to me, but did no damage. This gun with the others was withdrawn, before our entry, for mobile work in the Field.

The balloon had been towed aloft all the way from Bloemfontein without accident; and without deflating—a record in balloon work.

On the 5th Pretoria surrendered.

It may give some idea of our Spartan feeding to know that, when in the railway restaurant, I thought a cup of coffee (though sugarless) and some good bread (though butterless) to be most excellent feeding.

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We had slept in sleeping bags with no tents; but from Bloemfontein we three had a light cart for office, personal and Mess impedimenta, using our spare mounts. At night I slept under the tailboard, from which hung a square canvas screen giving a floor space of 4½ feet by 4, and in this tiny space Curtis and I might sometimes be seen at night playing a game of picquet for "love." In our marches to Pretoria and later, on the 6,000-feet Belfast plateau, it was generally very cold when we used to start before dawn, so Lord Roberts used to set the excellent example of walking some 2 miles before mounting, which was good for man and horse.

The Field Telegraph kept close up with Headquarters during the march, and once it told Lord Roberts that General Tucker's Division in rear was delayed by a bridge that had broken down. The Chief sent me back the 3 miles at the gallop, though it did not seem to me necessary. There was a bridge over a very boggy spruit, which I had strongly advised should not be crossed by the 4·7 gun till the Division was safe across; but the advice was not followed. The gun broke down the bridge and blocked nearly all the Division, whose Engineers were at some distance. The scene was a quaint one. The Naval Commander, whom we called the Admiral, had exhausted his vocabulary, while the General with compressed lips, bottling himself up, sat on his horse waiting for his chance to make a few observations. The poor muddied sailors and others, exhausted by fruitless efforts to salve the ponderous gun and carriage, were just waiting for the arrival of Sappers with their equipment, and ere long the march was resumed.

I always wondered at the celerity with which our

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Q.M.G. Grierson told off suitable billets to every one on entering towns, but, being on the Staff, his fine work throughout the war would not be known to the general public. So also in the case of Adjutant-General Kelly (the late Sir William), calm, strong and capable, with his endless hard office work.

One had been thrown a good deal with the Military Attachés of the various nations. The Russian, who stayed after the others had left, said, "We are taught that English soldiers cannot march, but I find they march splendidly. I have been especially astonished to see the Sappers stop to improve a drift, or for other work, and then hurry on to rejoin their Unit."—"Yes," I said, "and you may sometimes see the Infantry do the same."

The Italian and Spaniard said, "The behaviour of your men with the people is wonderful! We could not possibly give such freedom to our troops on entering a town as you do. Why, on the very night of your entry, the women and children walk in the streets safer from molestation than even ours at home."

The German considered that we were too fond of turning movements, and too shy of losses; and that certainly had been my feeling throughout.

Pretoria had been protected by permanent forts on the surrounding hills, under German direction, but the Boers did not hold them and had removed the four or five big guns.

The day after our arrival, Curtis and I rode to inspect West Fort some 8 miles out, expecting it to be occupied by our troops. There it was, grim and silent, the great gates open, and we had half a feeling as we entered that some Boers might be lurking in it. On succeeding days we inspected all the forts,

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noting important improvements for Infantry defence, and also arranging for intermediate redoubts and for some more distant ones.

We had detailed information of mines outside these forts and there was even a map of them, but our investigations proved them to be all bunkum, as at Johannesburg.

On June 11 was the somewhat doubtful action of Diamond Hill, when that fine soldier, Lord Airlie, was killed.

On July 7 Sir Redvers Buller came from Natal, to see the Chief. My brother, C.K., had succeeded me as Buller's Chief Engineer.

On the 10th I took Colonel Stackovitch, the Russian Military Attaché, to see some of the forts, and on seeing our new "Quagga" redoubt, with its 6-inch gun, 8 miles east of Pretoria, he said he would rather defend it than any of the Permanent forts. On dining with me he remarked how impressed all the Attachés had been with the altered conditions of war.

Later in the month we marched viâ Bronkhurst Spruit, of sad historical recollections, to Balmoral, whence, without accomplishing much, Head-quarters returned to Pretoria, where the welcome news reached us of a great surrender of Boers to General Hunter.

On August 3 Captain Harvey, R.E. (later Brig.-General, C.B., etc.), became my A.D.C. vice the excellent Curtis, who took up a good appointment.

In spite of the very shady practices on the part of some Boers, there was no bitterness shown by our men, indeed we were unduly forbearing at times, in my opinion. Instances could be given, but let bygones be bygones in their case. One incident may, however, be recorded of the use of our uniform by the

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enemy. *Vide* extract from letter dated August 13, 1900:—

". . . Captain North, R.E., was taken prisoner last night while repairing the railway at Rhenoster Spruit. He was working below with small covering Infantry party above, when a surprise attack took place. North saw a soldier in our uniform firing from the hip close by, so went up to check him, when another gentleman in khaki shoved the muzzle of his rifle into North's breadbasket, and cried, 'Hands up!' Then he discovered that the first gentleman and all the others were Boers in our uniform and belts; so to avoid perforation he acquiesced. Not that perforation matters as much as you think, out here, for as the P.M.O., who was dining with me last night, says, 'Bullets may pass through the stomach and body diagonally, transversely, perpendicularly, and anyhow, and often very little trouble results!' Well, North and the other prisoners were marched away, and though the Boers appeared kindly disposed, yet at first they had no blankets in the icy cold nights, no bread, biscuits, tea or coffee, only meat and some flour; but it was extraordinary how soon the men learned to manage, baking a sort of cake of flour and fat in their canteens, and doing with very little. They had to do forced marches on their feet while the Boers were mounted; and when at last, being hard pressed by us, the Boers ordered them to get up and go on again, North and a few others refused. Some English-speaking Boers spoke in their favour, and after long discussion these were left on the veldt and got into Fouriesberg, while the rest were eventually turned over the Natal Border, footsore and foodless.

"Talking of perforation by bullets: When a distinguished Medical authority arrived, a statement made by him that certain bones could not be perforated by modern bullets, but must be shattered, was denied by our P.M.O. saying, 'Well, I can show pretty nearly every bone of the body perforated.'—'I will not believe it unless I see it with the Rontgen Ray,' said Sir W.—'Come along with me round this hospital: you will hardly need the Rontgen Ray.' They drew the drain thing through a number of bone holes, or otherwise verified the P.M.O.'s statement: one bullet had actually perforated a finger bone, leaving a thin shell of bone on each side! . . ."

About this time Bethell and I took special interest in a new large redoubt on the Magaliesberg Range about 800 feet above the plain and completely over-

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looking the Boer "Wonderboom" Fort. A cable lift was installed for bringing all water and stores up this great height, but the labour was practically nil, for the descending cage filled with stones brought up the one with supplies, the winch merely controlling the movement.

On August 28 Head-quarters left for Belfast on the railway to Komarti Poort and Delagoa Bay, where we were on a great plateau, about 6,000 feet above the sea and 1,500 above Pretoria.

On the 27th, General Buller, coming from the Natal side, fought the successful action of Bergendal near us. We lent him some Artillery, which came into action on high ground well clear of his left flank. I sat down well below our guns, which the enemy's 94-pdr. was shelling over my head from a point miles away on his left, and so watched the affair through my Zeiss glasses. Later I met my brother, who visited our camp.

We pushed on to Komarti Poort and were back in Pretoria on September 24.

On October 9 Sir Redvers came through Pretoria with C.K. on their way home; and the former said to me more than once, "Your brother has done me well—right well." [1]

C.K. said that on Spion Kop, where he was in person, all the arrangements for bringing up water, improving communications and defence were well in hand, when to his astonishment and dismay the order was given to retire from that all-important position, which was practically gained. He held that quite an unnecessary number of men had been

[1] C.K. was promoted from Lieut.-Colonel to Colonel for his war service, and ere long retired. He was then appointed Adjutant Herefordshire Territorial Force, doing exceptional useful work throughout the Great War and for some years after it.

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crowded on the hill, whereby unnecessary casualties resulted without increased effective action.

The Ceremony of Annexation was performed in the square on October 24 with 6,000 troops present; and two days later I rode with Mr. Arnold Forster (later S.S.W.) to one of our new redoubts, 8 miles off.

Soon after, on riding alone to Silicat Nek, distant 25 miles, my horse, though quite fresh at the end of the 50 miles, was absolutely crippled next day with fever in the feet—a trouble due to our heating corn ration. The Boer ponies, poorly fed on grass and oat-hay, have no such troubles.

On November 29, Lord Kitchener assumed Command, Lord Roberts going home.

It had been a fine example to those who do not kneel in church to see Lords Roberts and Kitchener kneeling in uniform side by side in the little unfinished Cathedral in Pretoria.

General Marshall, C.R.A. Army, also went home. Now he and I were local Major-Generals (a temporary rank only) and I was senior to him. Yet on his taking up the appointment of C.R.A. at Aldershot, he automatically became a substantive Major-General and so senior to me, for that appointment, as also that of Chief Engineer at Aldershot, had been made a Major-General's Command. As a matter of fact I was only promoted substantive Major-General for War Services, two months before rejoining at Aldershot as C.E., so that, had I remained at Aldershot instead of going on Active Service, I should not have lost, as it happened, Army Seniority which resulted from three years' campaigning on the Staff—three years of absorbing interest they were!

My good old friend, Marshall (deceased), and I were made K.C.B.'s for this first period of the war under Lord Roberts.

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CHAPTER XVII

BOER WAR—UNDER LORD KITCHENER—1901–2

On the way home Lord Roberts found that the lists of names for Honours were not easy to deal with, so wired out for fresh lists on a certain fixed basis. It was some time before this came to my notice, for the R.E. were omitted. I spoke to Lord Kitchener at once, saying that it must be a mistake, but he declined to move. I pointed out that every Branch and Department had been named except R.E.; and that, as the suggested scale was distinctly higher than that observed for R.E., they would inevitably be worse off than the rest of the Army. He still maintained that if Lord Roberts had required more information, he would have asked. On returning to my office I wrote, setting out anew the case, and asking that a query might be sent home, or that I might take action; but in vain.

When General Hamilton (Sir Ian), Lord Roberts' Military Secretary, returned to Pretoria, the matter was laid before him; whereupon he exclaimed, "What! the R.E. omitted—why were we not informed! It was all an oversight, and I am very sorry."

Now I had made out fresh lists based on the new scale, keeping N.C.O.'s and men separate from the officers, hoping to carry the former even if it were too late, as it proved, to do much for the latter;

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and with Lord Kitchener's sanction laid them before Hamilton.

He feared it was now very late, but endorsed in red ink the names of some whose gallant service he knew: notably the 23rd Field Co., who stood so staunchly at Wagon Hill, holding up the Boer attack on Ladysmith at a most critical time, and losing both the Subalterns. Eventually a little was done.

Another case troubled me, and many R.E. may have thought that their interests were not sufficiently looked after.

The Chief gave a step of local rank to the senior Medical Officer at Stations, whereupon I asked that a step of local rank might be given at those Stations to R.E. Majors acting as C.R.E., pointing out that the latter is a Lieut.-Colonel's appointment and giving somewhat cogent reasons for so doing. But again my appeal was in vain.

In spite of all this, however, I would not have changed Lord K. of K. for any one else to finish the war. His memory was wonderful. He could carry in his mind all that seemed essential, of the scores of columns operating at once; and could rapidly recombine them to meet change of circumstances.

On December 9 my A.D.C. accompanied me by train to inspect all the Posts up to the Portuguese frontier at Komarti Poort; but had to stop at Waterval Boven as the Boers were holding the line farther on. In a few days, however, the enemy was driven off and we duly arrived at the Poort, after passing through striking scenery which was described on a previous visit in a letter as follows:—

"Machadadorp, September 13, 1900. . . . A few days ago I and my A.D.C. started to visit the railway posts eastwards,

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running down by steep gradients to this place, 20 miles from Belfast and 1,100 feet below; then down 10 miles of narrow valley with a clear, strong stream tumbling along and down a charming waterfall at the pretty Waterval Boven station lying amid steep hills. Here for 3 or 4 miles is a cogwheel railway to Waterval Onder, nearly 1,200 feet below. This is still more shut in by mountains and is a fever hole in summer. The rocky wooded gorge with its high waterfall is a treat to the eye after the vasty plains we have been in. At Belfast, 6,400 feet, there had been ice 1 inch thick."

I had my easternmost swim in Eland's River, having swum in almost every river we came across, finding those swims very refreshing.

A great deal of interest was crowded into each day, especially at Ladysmith, inspecting the extensive filtering plant installed by Colonel Rawson, C.R.E. Natal, visiting the great Military hospital near Mooi River and the Colenso battlefields and, incidentally, seeing one or two beautiful waterfalls to gladden the eyes after so much waterless veldt. A note from my sketch-book is as follows:—

"On the return journey from Natal I left the mail train at Newcastle to visit General Hildyard. That train was blown up by Boers immediately after. Next day I went on by mail train to visit Volksrust; and that train was blown up very shortly after. Close blockhouses ere long stopped all this.

"We rode from Volksrust to visit Majuba; left ponies with Orderly and climbed to summit in half an hour by main Boer attack in 1881. Far easier to attack than to defend, unless intelligently entrenched; the advanced knoll held by Highland post was a death-trap. As a test I selected the most difficult line of ascent, being in riding kit and 57 years of age. Yet Sir William Butler, when describing Majuba Hill in his *Life of General Colley*, speaks of it as nearly inaccessible. Dangerous and very incorrect views have been held as to the inaccessibility of hills for men or guns. In this case I could picture the Boers lying on the steep slope among rocks and grass, and picking out, clear-cut against the sky, the head and shoulders of each poor defender as he peered over the crest to see the concealed attacker."

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Extract from letter dated Heidelberg, February 11, 1901:—

". . . We spent a long time on Majuba, noting the condition of the graves, and left Volksrust the same afternoon, our guard being increased to thirty rifles as the Boers were active on the line. Arrived at Standerton, I spent two nights with General Wynne advising as to defences, etc. On the 9th we left, moving in a continuous line of nine delayed trains on a single-line railway, and all requiring to water, perhaps, at the same place, so progress was very slow.

"We soon passed the big crane of a 'Construction' train upset, and soon after an engine thrown over with a medley of smashed trucks. Round both of these a deviation was made as there were no appliances at hand to move heavy wreckage. Next day we passed two other wrecks before reaching this important station, where I stopped for work. The Boers so lay the mines as to be most difficult for the gangers to detect, and so as not to be detonated by trollies or light trucks. The ballast is broken stone which is removed so as to lay the mine rather deep, and is then very carefully replaced. When the train which I quitted at Newcastle was blown up, the small guard of an officer and nine men tumbled out and fired away till they were surrounded, when they had to give in. Several passengers, including a woman, had been wounded. Then the Boers robbed every one, including nurses, of watches, money, etc. When the next day's mail train was blown up, the Guard of fifty men turned out into the railway ditches and, as the Boers galloped up, their fire drove them off. Then the Construction train was wrecked and next a Supply train, but in this case the enemy got nothing as an armoured train came down in time. You see Kitchener's combined move east is on; and General French wires that they are driving some 9,000 Boers in front of them, 800 wagons passing through Ermelo alone, and with hundreds of thousands of sheep and oxen in front of them. The necessity of diverting Paget's and Plumer's columns in order to head De Wet off in Cape Colony was a sad blow to the scheme and a large gap in our long line of columns resulted, through which the enemy slipped back to wreck our communications, which had been weakened by taking so many men for mobile columns. All round the larger stations the grass is eaten close down to the roots by tens of thousands of animals driven in by us, or brought in by refugees: a very serious matter! Here, refugee Boers are building themselves sod huts: a fine-looking lot of fellows; and

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we are most kind and friendly to all Boers and their families that come in. . . ."

It was clearly impossible to protect the railways by large posts at long intervals, for in twelve months, as recorded on my office chart, there were no less than 230 blowings up of trains or rails. Remembering how at Suakin (where labour was abundant) even two-storied blockhouses had been erected in the day, and knowing that the enemy had no artillery, I had started sand-bag blockhouses, with steel-plated doors and loopholes, in the Komarti Poort district under Colonel Graham Thomson, my old Subaltern.

Then Major Rice, R.E. (later Major-General Sir Spring), designed a blockhouse which was generally adopted, consisting of two drums of corrugated iron, one having a diameter 12 inches less than the other. The space of 6 inches between the inner and outer drums was filled with gravel or broken stone, forming a bullet-proof wall: the roof was also of corrugated iron. The whole was sent out complete from Rice's factory at Middleburg worked by his R.E. company; but eventually the supply was augmented by contract elsewhere.

A ditch was dug round and the earth thrown up against the wall to the level of the loopholes, of which there were from twelve to sixteen, as a garrison of twelve was originally intended. There was a covered entrance from the ditch, barbed wire entanglement outside and entanglement carried from blockhouse to blockhouse. A wire in the obstacle ran over a pulley supporting a tin of stones in the blockhouse, which fell down with a clatter on the wire being cut, thus warning the garrison. Later, as labour and rifles became available, fixed batteries of

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three or four rifles were mounted in the ditch to enfilade the obstacle, as at Suakin—especially valuable at night. Flare signals, etc., were also installed.

Lord Kitchener was away for a considerable time down south on very important operations, moving rapidly about the country. Realizing the urgency of the matter, and convinced that he would approve, I issued instructions, as " by order," to all Commands on the railways concerned, to carry out this new system. The blockhouses were to be spaced so as to see the whole of the line, that is from half a mile apart to as much as one mile occasionally.

When Lord Kitchener returned he said, " All the Generals and Commandants on the railways are complaining of this order about little blockhouses: they say they will be mopped up in detail."

On my giving the reasons, however, he said, " Very well, carry on, and you can deal with protests." Some protests were reiterated, General Wynne being one of the very few who wrote in thorough agreement.

The work went on apace. The Infantry parties assisting the small R.E. detachments vied with each other to beat the record time for erection, even working thirteen hours in the day.

When completed, the enemy only scored one success in three months against the trains; and only took seven blockhouses in the whole war out of the thousands that sprang up over the vast field of operations, although many garrisons had to be reduced to six or seven men owing to Column requirements. Two of these losses were held to be due to sleeping sentries, and three were in the very difficult Brandwater Basin, far from any railway, with no troops available to send for relief.

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Here a chain of blockhouses had been erected to control a large commando which concentrated its attack on each in succession, shooting the loopholes to pieces—for on this type they were not of steel plates; and, moreover, the reduced garrisons could only man about half the loopholes. An officer some months later told me of his experience under that hail of bullets!

After the railways were secured Lord Kitchener adopted a very bold extension of the system, throwing continuous lines across country from railway to railway, 150 miles and more, although material and supplies could only be worked from each end. The longest line of 350 miles from Victoria West to the sea was not quite finished when the war ended. Here the difficulty of waterless country was solved as elsewhere by diamond-drill boring. The deepest bore with which I had to do was 400 feet in dolomite at Pretoria, but as a rule 100 feet sufficed.

Besides little blockhouses, solid two and three-storied masonry ones, with steel loopholed doors and windows and Machicoulis galleries, were erected to protect bridges and to close passes through the hills. The Boers left these severely alone. Their height enabled them to command much ground.

Eight thousand blockhouses in all were erected. Besides the great quantity of wire obtainable all over the country, 100,000 miles of barbed wire came from overseas.

To protect our convoys I had some of the great ox-wagons fitted up as mobile forts with steel loopholed sides and (curved) ends. They had hooped roofs and when the canvas was dropped over the sides they looked peaceful supply wagons. As a

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rule they were towed with the motor transport and the Boers could not face them.

I had hoped to have had a fleet of motor search-lights; but the great delay in supplying motors from England was simply heart-breaking. Eventually we made up four from all parts of the country just as peace was declared.

The Chief had been begged to order things in England, not elsewhere. As he had more than enough on his hands already without my troubling him, I generally ordered things very urgently required, from Belgium, and got them at once. This was brought up at the important War Office Commission after the war, when I took full responsibility, and said that the Contract Branch seemed to think nothing of the value of time in war, which might make all the difference between success and failure, affecting many lives.

Soon after our arrival at Pretoria we had occupied the charming little villa, "Hillcrest," vacated by Lord Kitchener, where we had the pleasure of entertaining friends who were passing through. Here, too, was a tiny lawn large enough for a Badminton court, which my excellent friend of Malta days, Ewart (later Lieut.-General Sir J. Spencer), said kept him alive. His only recreation, after his unceasing General Staff office work, was a game of Badminton now and then.

The following extract from a letter to my sister, dated "Hillcrest," October 20, 1901 (acknowledging congratulations on my being granted the Reward for distinguished Military Service), shows the lighter side of our life:—

"I lunched to-day with General and Lady Maxwell to meet the ladies of the Boer Camps Commission. They seem struck with

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all that has been done. I did hear something about baths for Boer women, but that will be a novel experience for them! They seem to be enjoying their experiences. This bit of bright woman-talk did me real good, and that is why I come chatting to you, my dear, as a very pleasant diversion. . . ."

Then, after telling my brother how simply we lived:—

". . . Yet I can enjoy a dinner like that at Lord K.'s on the King's birthday, and be all the better for it—with the best of Chefs from Johannesburg, I fancy—and with a pleasant change in conversation, for I sat between the Bishop and a legal Luminary who happened to know nearly every one I used to know in Cape Colony thirty years ago; so it was a pleasant and beneficial interlude. Indeed, my friend, the Army P.M.O., with whom I walked back, expressed this same view, saying the only change he got was going to church on Sundays; whereupon he was asked to eat his Christmas dinner with us. . . ."

Again to the same, November 4, 1901:—

". . . As regards Press attacks on men out here, much ignorance and unfairness is displayed. Among the Commanders of all these many scattered columns, working among unusually difficult conditions, there must be some who do not rise to the occasion and they are soon superseded. It is, however, our best and most daring men who run the greatest risks with their 'reputations.' Take Colonel Benson's recent case. He was of all others the one who with persistent dash and boldness so worried the Boers that they thought it desirable, within 50 miles of him, to shift camp not only after dusk, but before dawn. As he is dead, however, the *S*—— and other papers may refrain from saying how much better they could do it if they were out here. The strain on the nerve and endurance of Column Commanders who go for all they are worth, is prodigious—constantly on the move, constantly planning night attacks, and constantly open to night attacks, even from commandos reported during the day as 60 miles away. A man, too, may be bowling ever so well, yet if he does not get wickets he knows that the Captain must take him off. Look at your map: even at Lambert Bay beyond Cape Town we have a sea base from which we are operating against rebels; and again, farther north, Namaqualand way; and so right away beyond Mafeking 900 miles as the crow flies. Or, if you like, take from Cape Town to a point many miles north

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of Pietersburg, where we bagged Boers the other day, a distance of over 1,100 miles.

"Only the Boers counted dead on the field or taken prisoners are counted as their losses, irrespective of deaths from wounds and disease; and yet what did that queer fellow R—— say at the beginning of this year? Why, that there were not 10,000 left; whereas since then we have accounted for that number. . . ."

Again, to C.K., December 23, 1901:—

". . . The Sappers on these blockhouse lines have to work desperately long hours with never a rest, but then on railway lines the reduced Infantry garrisons of seven are positively sending outlying parties of three at night between the blockhouses to stop small hostile parties attempting to cross. These parties have, whenever possible, a native or two with them to serve as ears and eyes, as I had suggested at Suakin in 1885. A hard, solitary life verily, seeing that they are also expected to do some daily digging to improve the obstacle—and this is called resting after months of Column Marching! But the Boers are tough chaps, too, to stand their life.

"One has to try and keep every one up to the mark, and to that end weekly diaries of work are sent to my office, and also reports of crossings, or attempted crossings, by Boers: the former now rare, but the latter pretty constant as they attempt concentrations. I send a word of praise for extra good work to the Sections concerned. . . ."

Again, describing a storm at Pretoria:—

". . . I was close to a young plantation in which my horse begged to shelter, tail to storm; but I was thinly clad and in a minute soaked through and chilled, so decided to go on. The blast of wind and rain was terrific. It appeared a physical impossibility for the horse to move against it—in fact he was blown to a standstill, while my stirrup leather was forced back off the safety catch, for I was nearly blown backwards off the horse, but the stirrup was held up on my toe. The scene was extraordinary! In three or four minutes the wide track was a tearing brook, the deep side ditches boiling over. The great drops, driven almost horizontally, stung face and hands painfully and the eyes could only look down at the horse's feet and then could see little but the wind-drift from the waters. . . . The Irene 'deviation' railway bridge, 10 miles the other side of Pretoria,

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a great timber erection, was washed bodily away by the normally small stream; and a big masonry culvert, with high embankment, 3 miles south thereof, was also carried away. The embankment was 40 feet high and the flood rose to within 9 feet of the rails before the burst. Further south at Kroonstadt the Deviation was breached; but fortunately the permanent bridge, 60 feet high, was completed that very day for trains. In twenty-four hours dust was flying again and streams had dwindled to threads.

"A number of slanderous correspondents are doing all they can to blast Kitchener, such as . . . and . . . If one thing is more remarkable than another it is the wonderful bearing of our British troops towards the women. Imagine Germany allowing her chief Commanders to be grossly vilified during a campaign, when friend and foe, soldier and Colonial, will see it in the papers out here. Kitchener's task is most difficult, and such unlicensed howls will make it all the harder. . . ."

Extracts from letters of January 17, 1902, and February 28, 1902:—

". . . The enclosure wherein De Wet may yet roam without touching a blockhouse contains 8,000 square miles of difficult country, so you can judge of the vastness of the whole business when we talk cheerfully of a little pocket of that sort and to know that our wily, dashing quarry is yet in it. His recent efforts to cross the O.R. railway were foreseen and extra armoured trains brought to the threatened Sections to support the blockhouses; so he made no determined attempt, remembering his woeful experience in crossing a railway under similar conditions in Cape Colony. . . ."

". . . My Staff Officer, Colonel Bethell, has been appointed Inspector of Blockhouses, and says that on one cross-country line some roofs are entirely riddled with bullets with little damage below—that our special thick wire (proof against wire-cutters) has been cut through with an axe in two or three cases, but elsewhere shows signs of ineffectual attempts—and that our fixed rifle batteries, now fairly universal, count for much in effective night firing.

"Unquestionably the enemy is now desperately bothered and generally split up into some sixty little commandos. They say the end of the last big Drive on to the Harrismith blockhouse line was a wonderful sight: the whole country black with cattle, not to mention countless sheep. . . . Sir John Ardagh with

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Colonel Edmonds, R.E., arrived from England on Compensation Committee work, and they, with Sir Ian Hamilton, Chief of the Staff, dined with me; while, the night before, I dined with General Kelly to meet the Archbishop. . . ."

Ardagh, Chief of Intelligence at the War Office, told me that though it was his business most of his life to study countries on the map and he had travelled a great deal, yet until he travelled from Cape Town to Pretoria he could not grasp the vastness of our Field of Operations. As to this, later at Aldershot, the famous French General, de Négrier, after warmly commending our officers, said to me, "I ought to know, better than most, your difficulties; for in the campaigns in Algeria the size of the country was my great trouble; but it was small compared with yours."

Extract from letter of March 19, 1902:—

". . . Very early on the 11th, I started alone for Natal, meeting at Stations on the way some R.E. officers, and arriving at Pieter Maritzburg at 6 a.m. next day, and then driven by an A.D.C. to Government House to stay with my old R.E. friend, Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry McCallum, who though little senior to C.K. is now holding his third appointment as Governor. So much for passing from Military Service to Colonial. He is unquestionably a strong, able man. After business with Colonel Rawson, C.R.E. Natal, we lunched at Government House, meeting the Prime Minister, Hime, also an old R.E.

"Next morning, in spite of pressure to prolong my visit, Rawson and I started and, when half-way to Durban, mounted horses to inspect a large Remount Depôt where big works are in progress. Then two hours' run to Durban through a picturesque, tumbled-about country looking very green and cultivated, with abundance of bananas and mangoes. Next day a long drive to inspect the new Internment camp for Boer prisoners awaiting passage abroad. Next, to another Remount Depôt; then to see steel-plated mobile blockhouses under construction; and finally to inspect the vast piles of Hutments near the docks, and see that everything possible is done to prevent rotting, for there is such congestion on the railway that they cannot be moved.

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Then I dined at the club with the Commandant, Colonel Simpson, R.A., an old Malta friend.

"Next morning, over the docks, crossing the harbour, and along a wooded bluff, in a close sultry atmosphere, by a little path through dense bush where spiders, great and muscular, had established their formidable webs in undisturbed possession. Of course with one's stick the supports on one side were cut away to let the heavy giant and his castle fall to the ground. The harbour works were most interesting: the sand being pumped out on the sea side of a new wall to deepen the channel, and delivered on the shore side to reclaim land for wharfs, etc.

"That afternoon off by mail train for the 500 miles to Pretoria in twenty-seven hours. The gradients and curves are so outrageous in Natal that only six coaches are taken; and then we could only crawl up some hills with two engines. Just after reaching Pretoria the Boers blew up the line 4 miles behind us, for we had not thought it necessary to blockhouse the rail so close to that town."

On June 23 Lord Kitchener sailed for England, and was succeeded by General Sir Neville Lyttleton, under whom I served for another two months before returning home.

Since leaving England, nearly three years back, I had not been a day on the sick-list or a day on leave, if the day to visit the dentist at Johannesburg be not counted. Many thousands of the troops had great trouble with their teeth, owing probably to the very hard biscuits.

One honoured the men for their cheerful, patient endurance—March—march—march—for months under the constant strain of having to attempt night attacks, or of expecting the same any night. Hard, untempting rations: no bread or liquor on these weary treks: no papers or parcels: no leave. Indeed, some of these men who re-enlisted for the Great War, and who went through the Mons retreat, said that they found campaigning in France, in spite of all the shelling and heavy casualties, much

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less trying than their African experience. It is true, however, that they had not been through the Ypres and Paschendael mud morasses.

One had been much struck, here as in other campaigns, with our failure to work local transport as the people of the country work it. Boers with ox-wagons would march clean away from our Infantry with similar transport. The African trek-ox will not graze at night, so their marches are arranged that the beasts should have sufficient daylight feeding time. Many of our Commanders, at first, would march on till sundown, saying there is plenty of time for feeding before we start to-morrow. The poor oxen would simply lie down. Patient, plucky beasts, they simply died by tens of thousands.

Our camels in the Eastern Soudan were not trained for a waterless march as the Arabs do theirs, though my camels were so trained. In war men are put to transport duties with little or no experience, the Regular Establishment having to be expanded.

My farewell order to the R.E. was as follows:—

"On leaving South Africa, I desire to express to the officers, non-commissioned officers and men my high appreciation of the fine work they have done in all Branches, and of the soldierly qualities they have so consistently displayed. It has given me the greatest satisfaction to note the cheerful endurance during long and trying periods and to receive from many quarters reports of the excellent work of all ranks."

On arrival home at Ledbury, I was presented with an Illuminated Address, and entertained at a large public dinner. When I had to speak, I said they must have seen in papers at home and abroad what mistakes we had made and how brutally we had

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behaved. "Indeed, as a certain well-known lady had written, we had shown callous indifference to the poor Boer women and children in that hot climate, by dumping the Concentration camps on the south side of the hills." I made a long pause, waiting for an obvious comment from intelligent and scientific gentlemen present; but none came.—"There, gentlemen, like the British public generally, you fail to note that in South Africa the sun is on the other side of the Equator: the south side is the cool side; and that is a type of those malicious and ignorant attacks."

As to these camps, we found a letter from Botha urging that women and children should be sent into them, where they would be cared for. Incidentally, too, the men would be thus freer for commandos.

In Africa mass meetings had been held in many towns to denounce the slanderous attacks on our troops, at which Boers and Germans with one accord gave extraordinary testimony, repudiating the calumnies as "baseless, false, and devoid of any justification."

The Primates of the Dutch Reformed Church, at Pretoria and Bloemfontein, gave the highest and most unreserved testimony to the behaviour of British troops. This testimony appeared in the local papers, some of which are with me now.

On leaving South Africa one's hopes and confidence for its future rested on the known worth of Botha, De la Rey and Smuts, all honest, broad-minded and strong men. The disturbing element would be the Orange Colony irreconcilables. Those who know the history of the Orange Free State know that there was no cause of quarrel with us. They went in to support the Transvaal, and having done so, outdid

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the same by fight to the very bitter end when their case was hopeless. Indeed, the Free State was, once and again, the obstacle to peace.

Foreign comments on the bearing of England after the Colenso defeats had paid high tribute to our calm resolute character, at a time when they doubted our power to win.

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CHAPTER XVIII

SERVICE AT ALDERSHOT—1902–5

In the autumn, I rejoined at Aldershot as Chief Engineer, reoccupying the pleasant official abode of Vine Cottage, with the faithful bulldog Toby, of whom it may be said that his popularity was universal and his remarkable intelligence as keen as ever.

Early one morning a strange workman came in to do some repairs. So Toby approached him very sedately and just held him by the trouser saying, "I don't know who you are, so please wait till some one comes." Whereupon the man sensibly stood still till a servant came and said it was all right. On another occasion, Mrs. Festing and her daughter were staying with me, but, as I had business, Toby was told to take the ladies for a walk. In due course they started down a long garden path past a door in a wall at which Toby stopped. They kept calling him to come on, thinking it must be a private garden, but finally remembering that they were in Toby's charge they entered the North Camp gardens and were led through them on to the common and round home by a different way—my usual Sunday walk.

On another occasion C.K. was with me, and we went in canoes on the charming Basingstoke canal to Dogmersfield. Toby at once ran on, jumped in, timing himself so that my canoe should go clean over him, reappeared smiling behind, swam ashore,

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ran on again to place himself so that the canoe must drive him clean under water, this being the great point of enjoyment; and so on, time after time, for 6 miles without any rest.

My brother, though then in the middle fifties, had just ridden his push-bike 162 miles from the east of England to Ledbury, spent one night there, and the following night cycled from Gloucester to me at breakfast; and then declined to rest.

The most important works were Hut barracks at Longmoor and elsewhere. When these had been completed for a battalion at Longmoor, it was decided that the site would be required for mounted troops and that Bordon, 3 or 4 miles nearer Aldershot, would be best for Infantry. Upon this, Major Gordon, R.E., nephew of General "Charlie" Gordon, decided it would be best to move them bodily. He therefore laid rails through Woolmer Forest, jacked up the huts on to trollies, and deposited them safely on their prepared sites at Bordon. Some of these huts were 70 feet long.

Of Manœuvres and Field-days one or two may be mentioned: We were camped one night near Southampton, before embarking for a landing on the East Coast near Clacton-on-Sea, when I was awakened by a faint distant noise. Being an unusually light sleeper any strange noise awakes me. I had never heard a stampede; but knew it must be one of the Cavalry, camped 2 or 3 miles farther inland. I ran to wake the Chief of the Staff, Colonel Eyre Crabbe, and to turn out the guard and Military Police. By this time we could hear the galloping of the horses on the main road, on which ran tramlines. We could, however, do nothing to check the rush of maddened animals which were cutting sparks

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from the rails. Some went on into the water, others for miles into the country, some were drowned or killed themselves, and many had to be destroyed.

This catastrophe had been caused by a new-fangled plan of picketing which I had prophesied a year before was bound to end in disaster. Instead of using head and heel ropes, one fore fetlock of the horse was shackled on to a long iron peg. In the night a Cavalry horse had broken his leg and a veterinary surgeon had foolishly shot him with a pistol, whereupon frightened horses tore up their pickets and the panic spread throughout. The neighbouring Artillery horses, being secured in the good old way, could not break away. A fresh Cavalry regiment was brought down from Aldershot in record time.

On another occasion, when camped at Frensham, a great storm arose as we were gathering for Mess. We were just in time to save the Ante-room tent, by every one running to the ropes. There were three three-poled marquees opening into one another. Sir John French was dining out, so I happened to be the Senior Officer, and as we sat down to dinner the P.M.O. asked what would happen to all the lighted lamps if the tent was to blow down. I said that they would all go out. The words were hardly spoken when the marquee gave one sway and then went clean over, every one and everything being completely enveloped in the canvas. When I got clear, and had turned on my flashlight, I was greatly relieved to know that the great poles had struck no one. Almost at the same time the two other marquees followed suit. Of course the camp generally suffered a good deal.

In the final battle, when the King was present,

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I had arranged a new departure for the Defenders, viz.—real mines to be detonated when the Attackers arrived at a certain point. The scene was very realistic; the King greatly interested; and the Attack not a little surprised.

Then again, after a Staff Ride in the West Midlands, we finished up with interesting manœuvres in Berkshire and Wiltshire; so good training was always going on.

We were busy, too, with balloons and kites. The second time that I went up in a free balloon was on the occasion of an interesting experiment carried out by Major Heath, R.E. (now Major-General Sir Gerald). This was to see how far it could travel without expending gas or ballast, by aid of a trailing rope 200 feet long. I left Heath a perfectly free hand, and climbed into the rigging to take altitude observations, etc. Up we went at a great pace to 5,000 feet, being carried by our momentum above the height due to our ascensive lift. So down we went again nearly as fast, till the rope trailing on the ground took off enough weight to enable us to rise again. One's ears drummed with the very rapid changes of atmospheric pressure. The rope trailed over a house, and more than once we had to shout at men not to take hold of it. The most exciting time was when descending into a village green surrounded by high trees. Heath with commendable resource rapidly gathered up the rope, and as the wicker car took the bump threw the whole out, whereupon we rose rapidly, though it was apparent that we could not quite clear the trees. I had dived down into the car, in the bottom of which we both crouched, awaiting developments, as we tore through the branches; but as all ropes were sound we got

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through safely. Ere long the Great Western railway appeared in sight as we were travelling low with rope trailing; so to avoid risk of damaging the telegraph wires unless ballast were thrown out we called to some men to catch hold, but now when it was wanted they failed to respond. The next minute a plucky boy seized the rope, but a sudden gust lifted him off his legs, so we pulled the gas valve and came down. As I had a dinner party on at Vine Cottage, it was fortunate for me to be near a railway station.

The Kite balloon was weird work, under the close supervision of Colonel Cody, "Buffalo Bill," who flew about on a horse equipped like a Mexican Mustang, he himself wearing loose trousers, flapping hat and coat-tails! These balloons were for use when the wind was too strong for captive balloons. There was a string of box kites; first a pilot one with light rope of 400 feet, connecting it with a group of some five or six which carry up a steel wire attached to a drum on a wagon. Then when the pilot kite is steady, the wire taut, and at requisite height, a big box-kite travels up the wire on a running pulley, and to this the observer is attached. At first he used to sit on a simple cross-stick—no car—so nerve was required, and there was a nasty accident or two, due to starting when the pilot was wobbling.

Our Balloon Officer, Colonel Capper, R.E. (later Major-General Sir John) was sent to the St. Louis Exhibition in connection with ballooning and got into touch with the Wright Brothers, visiting their aeroplane works and grounds; and on return reported in favour of the aeroplane, as against the balloon. Sir John French and I strongly backed up this opinion, and we then could have bought up

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Wright Brothers. But so far from any action being taken, we were actually starved in our air work, our grant being simply ludicrous.

Hunting, lawn tennis and croquet were one's recreations, and many a pleasant day did I spend with my old Cape friends, the Lemprieres at Camberley. I had also the privilege of seeing my greatly valued old Chief, Field-Marshal Sir Lintorn Simmons, several times, before his peaceful passing away at Hawley.

It was pleasant meeting the many retired Army friends who had settled in the neighbourhood.

One day Sir George Marshall, C.R.A., came to my office saying that in the new drill-book (*Infantry Training*) C.R.A.'s and C.R.E.'s were omitted from the March Past with the Command Staff on ceremonial parades, which had previously been the case. They would have to go behind the Saluting Post with Non-combatant Heads of Departments. Marshall said he should resign as a protest, if this were to stand; and on my saying that I should do so too, he begged me not, as it would affect my prospects very seriously, while in any case he would shortly retire. We each wrote asking for reconsideration, and Sir John French wrote strongly to the W.O. and Lord Roberts, then C.-in-C., at once had the change cancelled, saying it had not been brought to his notice before.

When the office of C.-in-C. ceased to exist, this alteration in the Military status of C.R.A.'s and C.R.E.'s was again made. Sir George had retired, so I took up the question again, urging the following reasons, among others: Before leaving S. Africa, Lord Roberts had told me that he considered C.R.E.'s should be on Divisional Staffs; some were so used

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as Staff Officers for Engineer Services by Generals Hunter, Kelly-Kenny, Rundle and others. Lord Kitchener, being dissatisfied with certain defensive works, issued a special order that he would not only hold Generals and Commandants responsible for effective disposition of defences, but also the Engineer officers personally. It was only then that certain C.R.E.'s, who had not been consulted, were able to point out that they could not be responsible if they were not consulted and had no proper recognized position. I pointed out that the present decision would intensify that evil; also that when Sir Redvers Buller was appointed to command the Force for S.A., the first officers which he asked to be appointed to his Staff were his A.M.S. and Chief Engineer. When replying to me about this business, he wrote (June 1, 1905) that war experience had impressed him with the value of the Engineer being on the Staff, that he strongly deprecated the present change and said I might make any use I liked of his letter, so it accompanied my protest to the W.O. I also pointed out that the G.O.C. the Cavalry in the Boer War expressed a strong view officially of the necessity for an Engineer Officer on his Staff. I also objected to being styled, now, "Technical" Staff, the Engineer Arm being a fighting force. Finally, that the change would lower the R.E. in the eyes of the rest of the Army and tend to increase tactical separation. Sir John French, during the correspondence that ensued, supported my view in terms that could not be stronger.

Finally, Mr. Arnold Forster, Secretary of State for War, decided that the change should not affect me personally, but must stand for all others. At the same time an important concession was made in the

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case of the four chief R.A. Commands. Though I was glad that some benefit had resulted for them, yet it made the R.E. in a relatively worse position.

Thus the considered war experience of our three leading Generals was treated as of no value at all.

I then, though with great regret, put in the resignation of my appointment, which Sir John begged me to withdraw as it would mean the end of my career. He again most kindly went up to the W.O. to try once more for reconsideration. But as this failed I resigned, and the following appeared in Command Orders, August 19, 1905: "Staff Major-General Sir E. Wood, K.C.B., Royal Engineers, has been permitted to resign the appointment of Chief Engineer with effect from the 21st Aug. inclusive."

And so I said good-bye to my highly esteemed and hospitable Chief; to Major Cowie, my loyal Staff Officer; and to all my officers and men, with whom my relations had been of the happiest. It was, however, a real pleasure to know that my old comrade, Brig.-General Buston, would succeed me: no better choice could have been made.

Since entering the Army in 1864 the Temperance movement had gained a firm hold on it, with a consequent great reduction in offences. In Officers' Messes, such as R.A., R.E. and Infantry generally, this temperate drinking was very marked. In the large R.E. Mess at Aldershot hardly any liquors were drunk except a moderate amount on Guest nights. The young fellows would drink water in order to save money to keep a hunter; and their afternoon teas, instead of the old-time whiskies and sodas, were something to behold!

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CHAPTER XIX

LIFE AFTER RETIRING FROM THE ARMY—1905–22

The wrench of leaving had been severe, but the old home, Orchardleigh, opened its hospitable doors to me as of old, and so became my headquarters.

In December I decided to stop hunting in order to taste the joys of ski-ing before getting too old, so went off to Adelboden to learn and enjoy that fascinating winter sport.

Among learners of ski-ing there was an interesting difference. Men, on reaching a fence at the foot of a practice slope, would try to turn back from it by a "Telemark" or "Christiania" bend, getting spills in which limbs and skis became curiously mixed up. Some of the fair beginners, on the other hand, would quietly sit down and so comfortably arrest their descent in a manner to be envied.

Captain P., R.N., and his wife were my table companions. He had devoted himself to figure-skating till he was so stirred up by my description of the pleasures of ski-ing that he decided to try. When fairly proficient he went on a short expedition with a skilled companion.

In a fall he was unfortunate enough to break his leg. His friend threw his coat over him to keep him warm and then flew off to get a sleigh from some chalet. P. declared that his pleasure in the sport,

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short as it was, was worth the broken leg, but his wife held a very different view.

The Bonderspitz, 8,000 feet, was my highest point. Very late in the season I went on to Grindelwald, where ski-ing and skating were over and the hotels almost empty. As no companion was available, I engaged a young guide for the ascent of the Faulhorn (9,000 feet), where of course the going was soft and heavy. I had two Norwegian ski-sticks, while the guide had only one stick, and could not keep up though I encouraged him with the contents of my small flask of white wine. He apologized fully, saying he had been dancing most of the night; and with an effort joined me on the summit. Here the views were grand: on one side the peaks of the Wetterhorn, Eiger, Shreckhorn and Jungfrau piercing the sky; while on the other, far below, placid lakes; and many miles beyond the long line of the snow-clad Jura mountains. On coming up we had heard the roar of an avalanche on the other side of the mountain, which had shaken under us, so I suggested returning the way we came, but the guide thought the snow would be harder on the other side. He flew straight down the very steep top in grand style, waiting for me far below. I could never have emulated him. Moreover I was anxious to avoid a toss, as both knees were bandaged in consequence of strains, and therefore my ski-ing down was very cautious. Soon we ran into the track of an avalanche: great masses of hard compressed snow which caused us some trouble.

Next day I was ski-ing down the road after visiting the ice grotto at the foot of the Wetterhorn glacier, when another guide accosted me, desiring to take me over the glacier. "Surely," I said, "with avalanches

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falling on all sides, it is too risky." But he said he had taken an American over the previous evening, so I went, though knowing it to be foolhardy. Sure enough, we found their overnight tracks swept away, in two places, by avalanches.

Half of the up-valley summer hotel had been swept away this same afternoon, and next day, a foolish party that went out to view it, only escaped with their lives by sheltering under a huge overhanging rock. I watched this avalanche from the start—the whole valley under the Bär Hotel was filled with snow-dust and every one said it was the finest in memory. That same day I saw two avalanches descending simultaneously from the Eiger and the Mittelberg. When they met, a huge mass of snow was shot up skywards.

After a couple of little expeditions from Grindelwald, I planted myself for a week's sketching at Lucerne, and then went on to Florence and the beautiful hill cities of Siena, Orvieto, Perugia and Assisi, all full of varied interests: medieval fortifications, glorious churches, pictures, and stirring histories.

In May my abode was at Hertenstein, a charming place in the centre of Lake Lucerne, where I had intended to wait till the season was far enough advanced to ascend the Jungfrau. However a better idea suggested itself. I sent orders for the youngest *Zephyr* to come out from England.

[1] So on May 1, the *Zephyr*, newly varnished and with a new set of perfectly fitting silk sails, was sent from Herefordshire to Hertenstein. Lake Lucerne is beautiful beyond words in springtime.

Like all lakes in mountainous districts its reputa-

[1] Extract from *The Field*, by kind permission, August 1906.

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tion for sailing is not good. During my seven weeks' stay I only saw a sail on two occasions. The wind proved, however, generally light enough for all three sails of the *Zephyr* to be carried, though in doubtful weather the jib was not set, so that in case of a sudden squall sail could be struck and everything stowed below with extreme rapidity. Moreover, on the first sign of bad weather the large mast was replaced by a small cruising one. A sudden sensation of colder air had once led me to make this change, when a storm burst fiercely on us, giving but little time to stow this sail and the mizen below, and make the well-cover tight before a very angry sea was raised. In this same storm a small yacht on a neighbouring lake was capsized and two men were drowned.

Sailing one day to the head of Alpnacher See, I spent the night at the top of Pilatus, where the hotel had just been opened for the season. Next morning, putting the canoe on a light spring wagon, we trotted off to Sarnen See, from which the little river Aa descends into Alpnacher See. It falls about 120 feet in 6½ miles and being in half-flood tore along faster than was comfortable, especially as every one said there would not be enough head-room under the bridges at Sarnen.

Had not the *Zephyr* been marvellously handy, it would have been sheer folly to have embarked without previous reconnaissance on so confined and furious a stream, on which one might suddenly come on an obstruction. When the second bridge appeared in sight, just ahead, it looked almost impossible, so with a very strong back stroke the canoe was spun round, like a top, upstream against a low wall on the top of which my fingers could get a

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hold. It was essential to keep the bow close in to the wall as we slowly wormed our way up, otherwise the torrent would have flung us out, and down on to the bridge close below. A bush was reached to which we made fast, and then a visit to the bridge proved it to be just practicable.

Very shortly a roaring dam appeared round a corner and the same tactics were adopted, when it was seen that the safest descent would be on the far side. Then paddling across as hard as possible, there was yet barely space to straighten the canoe for the descent before we entered the hurrying turmoil of waters.

Soon the low railway bridge hove in sight, but here a friendly back eddy made a landing easy. The headway was measured and was exactly 18 inches. By lying at full length there was just room for my nose and the *Zephyr's* to be swept along uninjured; for here, the bottom being paved, the current ran smoothly without any waves.

After this the character of the stream entirely changed. It widened out over a bed of boulders, with various channels, and all the water, as far as one could see, tossed and foamed, making far too much noise to be pleasant. There was no breathing time between difficulties. The channel selected would split into others, and finally the poor *Zephyr* came bumping down one so heavily that a landing to prospect was desirable.

The waters gathered together again, running, swift and deep, along a marshy meadow, before splitting up again, very awkwardly, as it seemed. Hurriedly, the canoe was spun round, head to stream, against the bank, but there was only grass to catch hold of, which kept breaking away in the hands.

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It was most difficult to prevent the bow being swept outwards, so it was too risky to put the paddle ashore for fear of being swept away without it. It was therefore laid across the deck, ready for instant use.

On my stepping very gingerly ashore, the waves caused the paddle to wobble, and the last blade was just disappearing when I made one plunge and caught it! Of course it flashed through the mind that we must be in for some queer experiences by so doing, but it would never do to be left paddleless.

I went into icy cold water over my hips, without touching bottom, but deeper immersion was arrested by aid of the canoe, for as the bow swung rapidly out I got my chest on it. Then at the proper moment some vigorous frog-like propulsions were given by the hind legs, driving the stern inshore, and the next instant an overhanging bough was seized and ere long we were both safely on the bank. The *Zephyr* had not had the opportunity of proving whether she could of herself have negotiated a most awkward corner, before the pilot could scramble on board and resume management of affairs. This riverside was so completely devoid of houses and people that, after wringing out my sodden garments, they could be hung up to dry in the sun while I took a brisk walk downstream to select the best course, and so travel the short remaining course without misgiving.

We put up that night at the head of Alpnacher See, and it was said that the *Zephyr* might be proud of herself, as no other boat had been known to make the descent.

Next day it was a stiff paddle against half a gale of wind until, on entering Lake Lucerne, lofty

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Pilatus crashed and roared and rolled overhead, and a thundercloud burst. Sheets of great drops fell vertically in a sudden and complete calm. Then the Righi and other heights took up the challenge, and there was a magnificent celestial bombardment on every side. In the canoe, with waterproof cape and combined well-cover and apron, one was secure from all assaults.

When the time came for returning to England, the big sail with sailing keel, etc., were sent home separately and a start made on June 21.

On that morning the *Zephyr's* admirers had garlanded her and placed fine posies of roses in the mast-holes, which was very pretty of them! She was carried in the hotel motor boat to Lucerne, where I embarked as unobtrusively as possible under cover of the boat, near the first bridge over the Reuss. On every pier was a notice to stop, so it was important to get through unperceived by police, after which nothing short of shot-guns would be likely to stop me.

Hardly were we through, when there was vociferous shouting on the left bank, instantly taken up most lustily on the right bank, while on the third bridge people shouted and brandished sticks and umbrellas at us. I smiled amiably up at them as we passed under the low bridge within 4 feet of them, yet they did not look pleased. There was practically no danger, as the dam, close by, was far from difficult, as also was another half a mile farther.

Ere long the Reuss became very turbulent with heavy, crested, curling, tossing waves. It was important to hug the inner corners at bends, for below them there would be slacker water from which one might have time to observe what was ahead.

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No information about the river had been obtainable.

The small dams, only halfway across the river, were simple enough; but at last there came into view a great masonry dam, from shore to shore, with a central opening for which I was steering. As a man was waving for me to stop I jammed the canoe into the densely wooded bank and landed. We could easily have run the opening with its simple drop of 4 feet, but as there was a friendly man on the spot we portaged. We then entered heavy water in a continuous roar, so after rushing down some distance and seeing no end to the rapids, I was afraid of suddenly coming on to the dangerous place, against which the man had specially warned me.

I therefore ran ashore, in a back eddy under a great rock, and landed; but oh! what a scramble it was through the pathless wood until the awkward place in the river was reached, and the best line of descent was decided on.

Soon after this we ran ashore at the delightful little town of Bremgarten, where the greatly interested populace thought the idea of shooting the dam much too risky. The current was far too strong to regain the upstream position for passing through the central opening, so, after one fruitless effort to do so, we jumped the dam near the shore where there was just enough water flowing over it.

Having been told on which side to lie for a dam a mile below, we came safely through the opening, in which the waves were very big. At last about 3 p.m., at a bridge, where there was an inn, I inquired, and was told of another inn, a mile below, at Windish, where there was a most dangerous dam, and where the landing above was hardly possible.

For once we had developed a leak either from a

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certain heavy bump against a sunken rock, or, more probably, from jamming ashore among trees. Carrying the baggage to the primitive inn at Windish, I found the weir to be indeed very formidable, and went back to repair the canoe, and paddle her a little farther down. We had come nearly 40 miles and, for the first time in my life, my head danced for hours from the continual dancing of the *Zephyr* on the tossing waves.

The roar of that Windish weir, all night, really got on my somewhat aged nerves, yet I decided how to make the very complicated descent, and left the inn next morning with the intention of trying it. And this is how we did it. On crossing the bridge below the weir, there was seen a nice little place for putting a canoe into the water, and further on there was a nice little hand-cart for putting a canoe on, with the *Zephyr* all ready on the bank for it—so that is how we did it! In a short time we ran into the river Aare, a fine and comfortable stream.

A huge masonry dam, for electric power, with a drop of 10 feet, necessitated another portage, and ere long we were on the Rhine, and so down to Laufenburg, some 24 miles in all. Here the Rhine plunges through a narrow rocky gorge in a truly magnificent cataract. It seems incredible that the river, as we know it at Schaffhausen Falls, when swelled by the Aare and Reuss, can be squeezed into so narrow a space.

The *Zephyr* was housed in the hotel, while I enjoyed, from many points of view, the wonderful turmoil of waters. I wandered about the old castle on the hill, and after dinner visited for the second time the open-air gymnasium, which was in full swing, lighted by oil lamps. I wished we could see

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the same excellent exercise and instruction going on in England.

Next day we entered the river at the foot of the cataract, finding a smooth-running stream most of the way, but with one or two long heavy rapids, in which, as the paddle was still kept going, some high crested waves would break right on the deck.

On one occasion the whole river was full of broken water, with a drop farther on, but as we were heading for what seemed the easiest course, a man on a little pier signalled frantically for me to run ashore. On joining him I recognized that the turmoil of waters was very formidable, though a practicable spot existed, for which we had been heading. As it was now impossible to regain the necessary position, we portaged; but this was not the first time that we had been diverted from the line that would have given pleasant excitement, with practically little risk for such a safe craft as mine.

Finally another huge dam for electric power blocked the whole river, so we ran ashore, but it was some time before we were comfortably housed at the Hôtel des Salines, Rheinfelder. Here, after a change of garments, I was soon sitting in charming gardens, listening to a good band, and drinking pots of tea, for it was thirsty weather. Later, it appeared that the proprietor had been ski-ing with me at Adelboden.

Sunday was spent in this interesting old town, with its crooked and picturesque bridge, and on Monday a start was made in the rapids under the hotel, much against the general advice.

To my surprise beautiful nosegays were placed in the mast-holes by fair hands, as at Hertenstein, and the time of starting having been notified to the hotel

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lower down, there was more than enough pomp and ceremony to suit a modest man.

As we danced down the rapid, past the lower hotel, there was much waving of hats and clapping of hands, which was duly acknowledged by waving of my panama, as soon as we were straightened for passing through the only arch of the bridge, which did not appear hazardous.

Arrived at Bâle (Basel), the question of how and where to land was urgent and difficult. Seeing a tiny spot on the left above the bridge, I landed and, passing through a back door, found myself among the white-robed cooks of a pastry-cook's establishment. The men interested themselves at once, and on their own initiative carried the *Zephyr* into the house; and next morning my bakers gave me a good send-off.

Though I had left my hotel as unobtrusively as possible, yet the balcony of "Les Trois Rois" was crowded as we passed under it, and salutations had to be returned.

We were soon in the canalized part of the river, just like the canalized part of the Danube, with its endless poplars and willows, old channels cutting in and out, hazy blue heights in the distance, and with the very swift smooth-running stream hurrying us along.

I did not paddle, but lay at ease, only guiding the canoe, when necessary, into the best of the current. We drifted the 36 miles to Alt Breisach in 4¼ hours, and yet the floating sticks went even faster as the canoe was retarded by the air against us. There was absolutely no traffic, so one might have slept in the intense heat, were it not for the bridges of boats, which required care in passing.

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From Breisach a short train journey took me to Freibourg, through a plain in which the hay harvest was in full swing. Here, as in Switzerland, a pair of cows usually draw the big hay-wagons, and of all the smug, self-satisfied, contented-looking beasts, commend me to those cows. Domesticated animals enjoy pulling: the dogs in these countries—well-nourished, sleek fellows—evidently do so. I see one at starting, barking joyously, prancing and rearing into his collar: I meet the same dog some hours later, still proud of pulling his best with his man friend. My dog Toby delighted in pulling me up the interminable steps at Malta.

Next morning, which was very hot, I drifted the first 25 miles, in three hours and ten minutes, reclining comfortably with my legs on deck, and then, as a favourable wind sprang up, the little sails were set for the remainder of the 44 miles to Kehl. Here, running under the bridge, I rounded under some swimming baths and managed to land inshore of them.

I then visited old Strasburg, with its beautiful cathedral and ancient buildings, returning to Kehl on the 29th to continue the voyage.

Commercial navigation may be said to begin here, the current being only half as fast as it had been. The wind was fair, so two sails were set and, fortunately for my convenience, openings in the various boat bridges happened to be made, just as we reached them, to admit of the passage of paddle steamers, towing long strings of barges.

I had one narrow "squeak" at the first flying bridge, which I had not noticed, till close to it on the wrong side. Masts had to be stowed below at lightning speed, and then we just slipped through

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under the chain of one of the swinging floats, against which, however, we took an unpleasantly heavy bump.

After about two hours came the first furious squall aft, with driving rain blotting everything out, so sails had again to be struck and the little mizen set as a mainsail. Ere long I actually reefed this, a thing never before done, and yet we positively flew along. The sun soon came out again, but thunderstorms and furious squalls gave fine excitement. Later, when the conditions had been fully gauged, and with a very long, wide reach before us, and the gale on the quarter, the cruising mainsail was reset, so that we tore along at a pace never before attained by the *Zephyr*.

After covering 67 miles we reached the interesting old cathedral town of Speyer (Spires), where a stay of three nights was made, including one day spent at Heidelberg.

On July 2 we reached another beautiful cathedral town, Worms, only 30 miles distant; and as usual I took 1 lb. of cherries on board, and wanted little more on the run.

Since Mannheim the width of the river had averaged one-quarter of a mile and there was much traffic. The *Zephyr* enjoys the big waves raised by the paddle-steamers, though Captains and others shout and wave warnings.

On July 3 we reached Mayence, 32 miles farther, and left again next morning. The river was now very wide with long wooded islands and a slow current, but as there was a nice breeze we sailed all day.

At Bingen and Rüdesheim, 19 miles below Mayence, the hills on either side close in on the river and castles begin to appear. The first rapid, as it appeared

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from above, proved to be a little drop over which we sailed. We sailed over ten of such little dams (extending half across the river), which are built to give more water for the steamers, while the channel of the river has also been deepened by blasting. Our course enabled us to sail clear of all steamers and afforded a little mild excitement.

At Lurlei the river is only about 200 yards wide, but is said to be 70 feet deep.

At St. Goar (38 miles) we turned into a cosy landing-place under the hotel gardens, where willing hands at once carried her up to the hotel. The following day, a pleasant, uneventful run of 35 miles brought us to Andernach, whence we started on the 6th against a strong head wind, while occasional squalls raised turbulent waves. On one occasion a big steamer, with a train of great barges, passed on one side of us, while a similar train passed on the other side in the opposite direction. There was a rough sea on, so there was a resulting jumble of tossing waves, between and over which we threaded our course delightfully, just avoiding this crested fellow and that one, as they appeared certain to break over us.

There were tremendous downpours of rain which, however, ceased as we reached the opulent-looking cathedral city of Bonn (26 miles), where for the first time appeared a boat-club raft, on to which the *Zephyr* was lifted.

Here, as at Heidelberg, students display countenances curiously carved. One very plump student at the table next me had a complicated system of scars, while another had one healed slash from nose to ear, and a new padded one which caused him some inconvenience.

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On July 7 a quiet sunshiny drift of 20 miles brought us to Cologne, and the *Zephyr* received her last cheer from an excursion steamer just before entering on her very difficult landing in the midst of steamers, barges, mooring chains and hawsers—not to mention a bridge of boats. Fortunately the current here was not strong, for twice we had to turn back against stream to find a suitable opening. Eventually we berthed on a friendly bathing float, close to forwarding agents, who took charge of the canoe for Herefordshire.

Throughout the trip, except on one occasion, first-class hotels were available, and by the railway a portmanteau was sometimes sent on in advance to certain towns, though this was hardly a necessity as the canoe can carry so much luggage.

The distance from Bâle is 325 miles, and thence to the starting-point about 125 miles.[1]

I was back in Ledbury early in July. Soon the call of the river compelled me to try and do the very difficult part of the Wye from Builth to Hay without a portage. In my youth, a portage of a few yards had been necessary in the rocky, turbulent "Erwood" rapids, where, at times, a truly magnificent display of boiling waves may be seen. In spite of many warnings of disaster from men on the banks, the *Zephyr* came down triumphantly, and thus holds a record of descending from Builth to the Severn without a portage.

This year I was asked by the editor of *The Field* to sustain a discussion upon "Open" canoes *versus* "Decked": in which I supported the decked.

[1] It may be noted that the two *Zephyrs*, one built in 1890 and the other in 1896, are in 1922 still going strong.

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C.K. remarked that my opponent had never seen a *Zephyr*, which was as good under sail at sea as down a rapid; and in which one could keep self and stores dry under all conditions. Moreover the watertight compartment is most valuable, as my records show.

Boatbuilders on the Thames, in the early days, had spoken of building similar craft, but I explained how much more costly they were and that for Thames work the Canadian might be more popular.

In May, 1906, I was automatically retired at the age of 62, for, as was to be expected, promotion to Lieut.-General was not given.

Early in October I was married to the widow of Horace Radclyffe Dugmore, Esq., of Parkstone, and eldest daughter of Lieut.-Colonel Robert Bourne, of Cowarne Court, Herefordshire. I had known the family intimately and had spent many happy days at Cowarne Court.

We lived at my wife's charming residence, "The Mount," overlooking Poole Harbour and Brownsea Island, the extensive waters, with the river giving access to Wareham, being ideal for canoeing. Time and again we would have tea together, floating peacefully on the broad waters, the *Zephyrs* lashed together.

In 1908 we decided to live in our old county, so we took Byletts, near the Welsh border, half a mile from the ancient "black and white" village of Pembridge, and situated on a knoll between the trout and grayling river Arrow and the trout stream Curl. On the latter I made a dam with sluice gate, whereby the May-fly fishing was improved, besides providing a pretty stretch of brook on which our young friends could paddle, and making some orna-

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mental water with an island. This is worth recording, because one day I saw in the shallow pond a large fish which I took to be a pike. I ran up my gun, and shooting well under him, he was brought to the surface on his side, temporarily stunned. Then he looked much too bright for a pike, so I hurried to the canoe, and by the time we got to him he had nearly recovered and only the tail was out of water. This I grasped, and had lifted the fish far enough to see that it was a grilse, before he escaped into the weeds. Two days later he paid the pond another visit, but was left in peace. He had come up the Severn, the Wye, the Lugg, the Arrow in flood, and finally the Curl.

From the first I supported Lord Roberts's scheme of National Service and spoke for it about the country, being firmly convinced that Germany would go to war directly the Kiel Canal was finished.

One used to say that the attack on us would be one of surprise, and the first thing we might hear would be of torpedo attacks on our ships in harbour, mines being dropped to catch any ships coming out in pursuit, and an Army leaving German ports at the same time. Anyone who read German writings knew what their views as to England were, but our politicians and the general public, led by our Ministers, derided the idea of invasion. How different was the view during the Great War! Then, though our greatly superior Navy was fully prepared, though the East Coast was entrenched, though the Germans were at death-grips with powerful foes, though our aircraft were on the watch—yes then, with everything in our favour, there was a state of chronic alarm, and the Eastern District was crowded with men, who if sent to reinforce Haig when he so sorely

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needed them, should have prevented the German break-through in March, 1918.

On the occasion of Lord Roberts's eightieth birthday I went up to London, having been asked to propose the complimentary Resolution to him at a great gathering at the Queen's Hall.

In Herefordshire there is an old-established Bow-Meeting Society, and one of its Meetings was held at Byletts with its usual ceremony and circumstance; but during the war no meetings were held, and now it is carrying on in far simpler fashion.

In 1914 my eldest brother, John, died—a remarkable man! At the age of 70 he bicycled to Byletts, 25 miles; at once went out entomologizing, played lawn tennis most of the afternoon and billiards after dinner; then, refusing to stop, started home at 10 p.m.

He was absolutely fearless in the hunting field, and made light of his various breakages. Once I met him riding back from hunting, quite jaunty, nor did he tell me he had been badly kicked, and two days later, though three ribs were broken, he cycled the 7 miles into Ledbury, and back.

He was an authority on Entomology, and in correspondence with experts abroad. Once when we were walking along very quickly, he said, "Stop, there is something I don't know." It took careful looking for me to see the small grub in question! He pill-boxed it, fed it, and eventually out came a moth not known in England, which he sent to Germany to be named. His unique collection of Herefordshire butterflies, moths and flies was bequeathed to the Hereford museum with an endowment to cover the care of them.

His work with the microscope was a revelation to me. Once he was dissecting the ovipositor of a

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small moth and, as he had not yet regained his early facility with the pencil, I sketched under his direction the microscopic organ in question, altering the drawing till he was satisfied.

During a severe epidemic of influenza, when he could get no assistance and was suffering from the disease himself, he came home late at night, almost collapsed, and took the contents of a wrong bottle. Knowing he was poisoned, he drank as much water as he could, and other things failing, tried the stomach pump unsuccessfully. He called his housekeeper to try it, but she failed. He then wrote a note stating the facts, and as rigors were coming on, tried the pump again himself, and this time with success. As to endurance, there was little to choose between John and Miles, for the latter when he was 77 years old bicycled 66 miles comfortably in the day, though he had never accomplished so much before.

In 1910 a retired Colonel, ten years my junior, persuaded me to play with him in a Lawn Tennis Tournament at Hereford. We were given a very good handicap, but one or two youngish couples had as good, or even a trifle better. Our united ages were 122 years, but we won easily, scoring 60 per cent. more points than the second pair.

In 1913 Miles and I were travelling luxuriously in the *Midnight Sun* to the North Cape, when at Diggermulen the Captain handed me a wire saying that my wife had to undergo an operation very shortly. The Captain, who was most kind, and the Pilot considered that my best plan would be to go on to Tromsöe on the mere chance of finding early conveyance southwards. But I hurried ashore to the tiny hamlet to ascertain how the post went

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south, and learnt that a boat starting early next morning would deliver the mail on to a small steamer some way down; and she again to a larger steamer farther on. There was just time for my traps to be landed before the *Midnight Sun* had to proceed.

I wired to Bennett, the excursion agent at Trondhjem, to prepare first-class tickets by the quickest possible route to any port in England. A clerk met me at Trondhjem with a bundle of tickets whose cost would leave nothing for food, tips, etc., but he said, "Oh, give me a cheque." I replied, "But you know nothing about me: I have never had dealings with Bennett." Still he said it would be all right. It was Sunday and his office was shut, so we went into an hotel, obtained a sheet of paper, and on it a cheque was written for part of the sum. It would seem that English travellers had a good name for honesty!

Arrived at Queenborough, there was a notice on a blackboard that a telegram awaited me. My brother-in-law, the late Rev. W. Twining, had thoughtfully wired to direct me to Liverpool, which I reached at 3 a.m. next day. I was able, to my deep thankfulness, to be with my wife for a short time before the very serious yet successful operation.

I stayed in Liverpool a month, and was much struck by its many philanthropic Institutions, by the neighbouring charming pleasure resorts for the people, and by the parks with their numerous bowling greens and lawn-tennis courts. The greatest interest of all was the noble cathedral in process of building. One could not but hope that the high rocky ground at the "East" end (it is far from true east) would eventually be cut away and a broad causeway constructed across the deep quarry to the "North."

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When the Great War broke out we were about to visit the Brookes at beautiful Fearn in Ross-shire, where we had been grouse-shooting two years previously. I at once placed my services at the disposal of the War Office, and received the reply that a note had been made of me in case of emergency. On a later visit to Town I got no further. My friends and acquaintances would meet me with "Why, I made sure you would be called up!"

A Colonel commanding a regiment asked me to apply for the vacant command of his Brigade, and the General Commanding the District wrote that he would gladly have me but must refer the matter to the W.O.; and nothing came of it.

It seemed to me that "cases of emergency" were fairly plentiful, and that my services on the East Coast, at least, would have been specially useful, for it might seem that no one had more practical experience in Permanent and Field Fortification than myself; while at the same time I felt fit for hard service in the Field.

Perhaps it may be forgiven me in my eightieth-year to indulge in the foolishness—and, must we say, the vanity—of boasting, for I felt the position keenly. I could do a hard day's walk after partridges, and get about a lawn-tennis court pretty quickly: I was County Commissioner, Boy Scouts; Chairman and Hon. Sec. Herefordshire Territorial Forces' Comforts and Prisoners of War fund; Member of the London Committee for P. of W. in Turkey; enlisted Private in the Herefordshire Vol. Motor Corps, being my own chauffeur during the war; Chairman, Hon. Sec. or Member of various Diocesan and Parochial Committees; Magistrate; Churchwarden and School Manager, etc.; while all my spare time was occupied

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in fairly strenuous work in the garden, and in repairs about the place in default of labour.

We used to have convalescent soldiers from the neighbouring hospital to tea, and what they enjoyed above everything was canoeing on the ornamental water with races for small prizes. They used to laugh heartily at the quaint efforts of the novices, who were in the great majority!

I was asked to speak at patriotic meetings, and one of my hearers, months later, remarked that what I had foretold had come to pass. It was just after the Serbians had driven the Austrians back over the rivers for the second time, when I said that unless the Allies gave the Serbians effective support they must be, shortly, completely smashed, with consequent disastrous results in the Balkan situation generally.

Being stirred by the King's noble example (so little followed by the public), I also spoke in my own and other counties in favour of Prohibition for the period of the war and for six months after; but not for longer.

At last, in 1921, it would seem that the resignation of my Aldershot appointment was forgiven at Headquarters, for I was appointed a Colonel Commandant in the Corps of Royal Engineers, which gave me great satisfaction.

In 1922 we bought Holmer Park near Hereford so as to be nearer relatives and old-time friends in the county; but, alas, within about a year, first Miles, and then the versatile and all-round athlete C.K. passed away after very short illnesses, both active and full of good works to the end.

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APPENDIX

NOTES ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE *ZEPHYR* CANOE, 1896

Length, 13 feet 9 inches. Beam, 6 inches above bottom, 2 feet 4 inches. Height at bow, 1 foot 6 inches; amidships to top of coaming, 1 foot; and at stern, 1 foot 3 inches. Height of coaming, 2 inches.

Stepping of mainmast, 4 feet from bow; and of mizen, 3 feet from stern. Well, 3 feet 4 inches by 1 foot 7 inches. Hatchway, close against bulkhead of watertight compartment, 12 inches by 11 inches.

The mast steppings are bored out of solid blocks fixed to keel and deck, so no water can enter the canoe.

The ribs are hoops of ash or American elm, steamed to shape, ten in number: where these are cut away for the well, they are supported on either side by ornamental uprights; but elsewhere a single upright runs from keel to deck under the joint of rib.

The bow and stern pieces are solid walnut with rebate on tail end on to which the longitudinal rods, nineteen in number, are screwed; these are of ash or American elm, 1 inch by $\frac{1}{2}$ inch for keel, $\frac{3}{4}$ by $\frac{5}{8}$ at bilge and beam, and a trifle less elsewhere, all tapering to bow and stern so as to save weight wherever possible.

The covering is "grey sheeting," a cloth formed of two layers of fine canvas with india-rubber between them: two thicknesses being laid from keel to rubbing piece at beam.

Rubbing pieces, of wood as before, run continuously from bow to stern over the inner rods at bilge and beam, and a heavier piece at keel: these cover all joints in covering; while short rubbing pieces about 6 or 7 feet long are fixed over bottom rods. All taper to the ends. In the keel are slots for keying on the detachable sailing keel; this is of

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brass, 3½ inches deep, in two lengths of 3 feet for carrying on each side of the well, and hollow to carry lead blocks, ½ inch thick, when required for racing or otherwise; this 6-feet sailing keel is keyed on to the above-mentioned slots.

The whole is varnished two coats, the first coat put on as dry and thin as possible so as to sink in as little as may be, because of the india-rubber layer in the cloth.

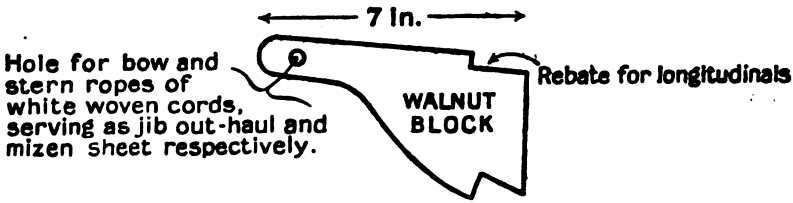
All put together with brass screws, copper tacks, and some india-rubber solution.

Some half-dozen rocking cleats, arrangement on either quarter for inserting crutches for steering when required, etc., have to be fixed. Also floor board. Well-cover of the sheeting, resting across the coaming by battens, and continued as an apron to attach to the collar-stud by means of a loop of thread.

Paddle, 9 feet long, flat-bladed, with oval handle, the longer diameter to meet the usual strain; weight, 2 lb. 2 oz. A square mainmast, hollow, with slot on rear face, and topmast sliding up and down inside with a tongue projecting through the slot on to which the upper part of the sail is laced. Thus the mainmast is free to carry the blocks and tackle for the topping lift and halyards, which is not possible in the case of the ordinary sliding gunter. Total hoist of sail, 11½ feet.

There are certain other little dodges that need not be enumerated. Weight of the canoe itself, 66 lb.

The bow and stern pieces are shaped for convenience of carrying thus:—



Section of bow and stern ends of canoe.

The whole frame is so elastic that in thirty-five years of canoeing, including the descent of many a rocky rapid, the framework of a *Zephyr* has never once been damaged by bumps or collisions. She remains staunch from one year's end to another.

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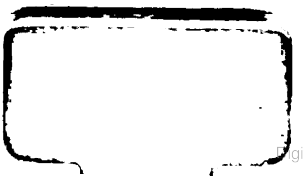

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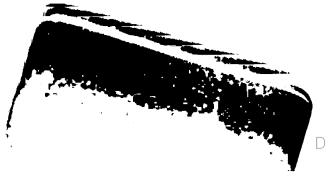

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